



The sole-talke of the Soule:

OR,

*A spirituall and heavenly Dialogue,*  
betwixt the Soule of  
Man and God,

Which, for the great affinitie  
*it hath with other bookes of the Au-*  
ctor published heretofore in our  
native tongue, is now  
entituled

{ *The fourth booke of the* }  
*Imitation of Christ.* }

Translated and corrected  
by THOMAS ROGERS.



AT LONDON

Printed by H. L. and are to be  
sold by William Leake, at his  
shop in Paules Church yard at  
the signe of the Holi-  
ghost. 1608.



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## To the Christian Reader.



Being much  
and earnest-  
lie requested  
heere-vnto ,  
I haue publi-  
shed in our

vulgar toong another of Mal-  
leolus, alia's Th. de Kempis,  
or, Kempisius works: not that  
(I confesse) which of som wel  
weening, though not so well  
deeming persons was cōmen-  
ded vnto mee, I meane that  
in the old English translatiō,  
and in som Latine copies too,  
called The fourth Booke of  
the Imitation of Christ,

A 3      which

To the Christian

*which indeede is altogether  
De sacramento altaris, and  
so intituled: but the next to  
that in Kempisius workes,  
namelie, the Soliloquium a-  
nimæ. This I haue tearmed,  
for the great affinitie it hath  
with the bookes of Kempisius  
by me heeretofore diuulged,  
The fourth booke of the I-  
mitation of Christ.*

*In the dooing whereof, I  
haue as little as might be  
varied frõ the auctors words  
and phrases, and no where  
from the sense, but where  
himselfe hath varied from  
the truth of God, and, I doubt  
not, wold haue redressed, had  
hee liued in these dayes of  
light, as he did in the time of  
most palpable blindnes.*

*And this haue I done with  
the*

Reader,

the greater alacrity, because I finde (and thou maist read it also in the Authors owne Preface) that hee not onelie doubted that he might utter some things both sonde and offensiue, but also wished to haue some godly corrector of his faultes, and praied vnto almightie God gratisusly to reueale such things offensiue, either vnto himselfe, or vnto some other.

Whose godly praier, God hath heard, and discovered those things for thy benefite, and testification beside howe Kempisius, the Author, howsoeuer liuing in a popish time, was yet in hart no Papist, but would like well of that which is done, as I trust thou wilt, whose edifying, & spirituall  
comfor-

To the Christian Reader.  
*comforting, I haue onelie ay-  
med at.*

*And reaping this comfort  
to thy soule, by the reading or  
hearing of this treatise, bee  
thankfull vnto thy God that  
giueth thee some taste of the  
celestiall ioyes in this mise-  
rable and all troublesome  
world, to whose gracious  
protection, I do most  
humbly commend  
thee and my  
selfe.*

The



The Authors  
*Preface.*

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**I** Haue gathered together into a little booke for my comforts sake, certain deuout sentences, the better so to commit them to memorie; I haue also disposed them as into a pleasant orchard, set out with all sortes of trees, and bewtified with all varieties of goodly flowers, where-into I might now & then enter, both for to chuse and behold at my neede such matter as my hart desires for the refreshing of the mind griued at any time, & overwhelmed with pensiuenes.

Now the more cleerlie, & readilie to finde vnder which arbor I might repose my selfe, or which floure were best to be culled out, I haue made the  
heads

*The Authors preface.*

heads of euery Chapter to glitter(as it were) with red titles. I haue likewise with variety of words, as now talking, now reasoning, praying now, now conferring, now in mine owne, now in another mans person, bewreathed about the text with a sweet, & delightful stile.

Wherefore I entreat them whosoeuer shall reade it, first that they be not moued with indignation at that which the writer hath done, for it was his mind wholie to talke (with his God.) Next, that they will pardon the imperfection, and plainness of the stile, considering that god is more delighted with words that be simple & pure, than with those that be artificiall. And if happely the sense in any place appeer either not sound, or not cleere

*The Authors Preface.*

enough, my desire is to haue a  
godly corrector of the same, tel-  
ling him withall, that what fōd  
matter so euer he shall espie, it  
hath escaped frō me not of pur-  
pose, but rather for that I was  
not heedie enough in marking  
what I writ.

Moreover, forasmuch as man  
in that iudgment of his which is  
most probable, may bee decei-  
ued; vnto thee, O God, almighty,  
and father of lights, doe I  
thine humble disciple make re-  
course, and this Sole talke ( of  
mine) do present before thy di-  
uine Maiestie, to the ende that  
thou maist both approue the  
things well saide, and disproue  
what is done amisse, and insinu-  
ate also either into my selfe, or  
some other faithfull seruant of  
thine, more rightly to obserue  
whatsoever things are offēsiue.

My request is also, holie Fa-  
ther

*The Authors preface.*

ther, that I thy poore seruant  
may obtaine at thy hands both  
time and space to abide in the  
all plētiful pastures of the scrip-  
tures, which be and shall be my  
chiefest comfort, vntill that day  
of æternitie appeare, & the sha-  
dow of mortalitie do decline a-  
way. And therefore withdrawe  
thou fro mee all vnprofitable  
cares, worldly desires, hurtfull  
affections, and what else may  
hinder me from my desired lei-  
sure. For hee must haue a free  
minde and a quiet, that would  
meditate of hidden and heauen-  
ly matters. Wherefore that I  
may bee worthy to attaine my  
sute, vouchsafe thou (my God)  
to endue and fill mee with the  
grace of thine heauenly ioy,  
that I may speake to thy glory,  
and to som comfort of my owne  
soule,

Chap



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# The Fourth Booke of the Imitation of CHRIST.

## CHAP. I.

1. *A longing of the soule after God.*
2. *The incomprehensible maiesty of the Lord.*
3. *An exhortation to the loue of God.*

## SOYLE.



*As for mee, it is good to  
drawe neere vnto God.*

1.

O short, and O  
sweet saying, embrac-  
ing God, and aban-  
doning the vniuersall world!

a Psal. 73.2

What more can be said? And what  
more-ouer is to be desired? Woulde  
it not suffice if that were performed  
which now is spoken? And were o-

B

ther,

*The fourth booke*

ther, yea many other things vttered,  
should not all in the end be reduced  
vnto this one thing?

Therefore, my soule, saie thou  
with the Prophet, *As for me, it is good  
to drawe neere vnto God*.  
<sup>ps. 73. 28</sup>

O my God, thou art mine onelie  
felicitee; thou alone art good<sup>e</sup>, and  
sweet vnto mee.  
<sup>Lu. 18. 19</sup>

To speake of thee it delighteth the  
louer; to thinke of thee, it liketh the  
religious, whose heart is not fixed  
vpon the world<sup>d</sup>, but hidden with  
thee in the heauens, to the end that  
both thou alone maiest bee his true  
peace<sup>e</sup>, and in most ioye; and he not  
vexed daily in this world, where  
false concupiscence doth prouoke  
vnto sin<sup>e</sup>.  
<sup>Mat. 6. 31</sup>  
<sup>Coloss. 3. 1</sup>  
<sup>Phil. 4. 7</sup>  
<sup>1. Iohn. 2. 16</sup>

O my God, how is hee affected,  
which is inflamed with thy loue<sup>e</sup>!  
How doth hee reioyce, that hath no  
pleasure in any vaine creature!  
<sup>Rom. 8. 35. 36. &c.</sup>  
<sup>1. Cor. 13. 4. 5. &c.</sup>

Are not these the words of such a  
man in that Psalme, whereout the  
beginning of my speech was taken,  
euen these his words?  
<sup>ps. 73. 25</sup>

*Whom haue I in heauen but thee<sup>b</sup>?  
and I haue desired none in the earth with  
thee?*

MAN.

MAN. O holie soule, o zealous  
soule,

*of the Imitation of Christ.*

soule, so longir g after God! What is that I heare? What is that thou sayest? Are the things both in heauen and in earth but small things in thine eies?

**SOVLE.** Surely I take all things but **SOVLE.** for trifles.

**MAN.** What then seekest thou? **MAN.** Whom would you haue without these? And where will you finde him if not in these things?

Hath hee either name, or place, or habitation to be sought by?

Where is the place where his honor dwelleth? of which in a certaine psalm **SOVLE.** i Psal. 136. 8 thou sayest, saying:

*O Lord, I haue loued the habitation of thine house; and the place where thine honor dwelleth.*

Make answer, I pray thee. For, if thou canst, shoue mee him, I will goe with thee, and wee will seeke him together, yea, and he shall be thy God, and my God: and wee shall bee full happie when we haue found him, and hold him.

**SOVLE.** What askey you this at mine hands? Or why so curiouslie doe you enquire of this matter of mee?

Thinke you I can, or am able to viter such things? What though gladlie I

**BA** would,

*The fourth booke*

would, conceine not yet, that what through the rarenesse of the thing, and the deepnes of the mysterie, I am restrained back?

What aske you mee? Aske them who haue both heard and seene, they are such as better can describe him whome you seeke.

kp. 94. 8. 9  
10. But rather aske him that knoweth all things<sup>k</sup>. For he it is, of whome we speake, that both best can tell you who himselfe is, yea and best declare the place of his owne aboade. Euen  
Psal. 119. 12 he it is (and none other) which teach-  
1 Psal. 94. 12 eth man knowledge<sup>l</sup>, and giueth his  
m lam. 4. 6 grace also to the humble<sup>m</sup>.

Make recourse vnto him which re-  
uealeth himselfe when hee will, and  
to whome he will<sup>n</sup>, neither is there  
anie beside him that can open. Hee  
alone can reueale to thee what the  
ioie is of such as loue him<sup>o</sup>, and that  
n Mat. 11. 35  
1. Cor. 2. 9 far more excellentlie than I can tell  
you.

MAN. But why speake you on this  
wise, O holie and humble Soule?  
Thinke not that I would know that  
of you, which neither ought to be  
known, nor can be vttered. Keep  
your secret to your selfe; let your  
doore still abide shut vpon you: let  
the

*of the Imitation of Christ.*

the scale of faith remain vncancelled,  
neither let the vaile, for me, be remo-  
ued from the sanctuarie.

Eate you holie bread ( by your  
selfe ) in the chappell, go in into the  
tabernacle of your house, ascend in-  
to the vpper parlor, enter into the cel-  
lar of the eternall king, or, which is  
more noble, & soundeth more sweet-  
lie, euen into the bride chamber of  
your celestiaall spouse.

I know it is written *P, It is not good p Mat. 15. 26*  
*to take the childrens bread, and to cast it*  
*to whelps.* I know this, I saie, and haue  
read it: but marke againe what fol-  
loweth, and take pittie vpon me, ac-  
cording to the words of her that said  
*q, The whelpes doe eate of the crummes,* *q Matt. 15.*  
*which fall from their maisters table.* 27

And therefore hide not that fro  
mee which I demaund, but of the  
greatnesse of your inward pleasures,  
poure-out euen a sparkle of the fire  
loue. Giue me one small drop of pre-  
tious wine, send forth some little sa-  
uour of the best ointment, whose  
chiefest parte and louelie comfort is  
well and vsuallie knowne to thee,  
that I also may taste thereof.

Why linger you? Satisfie my de-  
sire, and open the doore to a friend

*The fourth booke*

now at this third knock.

O beloued, speake of the welbeloued; let not me be neglected.

If you cannot describe him rightly as hee is, yet speake of him so well as you can. For indeede as hee is, who is able to describe him? Yea, who is able to conceiue the describer?

Therefore, if not, as in himselfe he is: yet tell mee what thou thinkest of him. If not what to himselfe: yet venter out howe good hee hath bin to thee.

For who euer shall search forth what he is in himselfe?

Thou wilt neuer doe it, because thou hast plainly confessed, & not denied, how speaking of him,

*Pl. 139. 6* Thy knowledge is too wonderfull for me: it is so high, that I cannot attaine vnto it. Whither shall goe from thy Spirit?

If then thou art not able to knowe thine owne spirit, which the creator and quickner of all spirits hath made,

*Act. 17. 25* how at anie time wilt thou knowe him which is vncreated? Did not this make thee all amazed to say,

*Pl. 35. 10* who is like vnto thee?

Notwithstanding, of all friendship, by some similitude describe him, whose essence thou hast not yet attained

*of the Imitation of Christ.*

tained vnto : Neither is it for you to denie to shewe him in part, whome you thinke can not whollie be reuealed.

S. I must needs say you are too curious, and importune vpon me. I thou searchest all my priuities, and lettest in thine hand into the secrets of my chamber.

I sent thee vnto him, and comdest thou againe vnto mee? Seeke you me, or him?

But I pray you, of what spirit art thou? Be still, I beseech thee, & trouble mee not. For whom thou seekest, he is aboue me.

M. But can hee that seeketh after God, so easilie giue ouer? Protract not to speake, for you may comfort mee forth-with. How long will you keep me in suspense? What, doe you say and vnfaie?

As I liue I will not giue ouer, except you bleesse mee. For I compt it a blessing, if thou shewe mee thy God.

Now therefore if thou hast seene him, tell me plainlie, and I will take him vpon my shoulders.

S. I know thou hast a great desire, and a loue vnto the creator.

*The fourth booke*

But a great thing is it which you require at mine handes, and such a thing as I am in doubt whether it may be done or no.

He whom thou seekest, knoweth it right well: for it is not in mee to let thee know so much.

Your demaund seemeth vnto mee  
 x *Sal. 3. 1, 6.* to be like that of the Spouse which in the songs did saie x;

*Show mee, O thou, whom my soule loveth, where thou feedest.*

Wilt thou then learne of me who this is, or what good hee hath done with mee? Doubtlesse it is not in me to show you.

But you are not content; neither his greatnes, who exceedeth the heauens  
 y *1. Kin. 8. 27* x, can deterre you; nor my weaknes, which in his eyes am nothing, make you to desist.

Why hast thou laide this burden vpon mee? I am not able to tell thee, vntill I goe into the sanctuarie of God x, and vnderstand the same.

x *Psal. 73. 17* Whie are you so desirous to knowe that, which may not be vttered?

M. And will you not? Oh, how faine would I bee instructed! For those things wee are most earnest to know, which the most hardlie maie bee

reuea-



*of the Imitation of Christ.*  
reuealed.

Notwithstanding, once againe I  
praie you bee not so hard, as altoge-  
ther to be silent.

Thinke not that forthwith I will  
vttter what you shall saie, vnto our e-  
nemies. I will keepe your saying as  
a friend, yea, as a very friend ought to  
doe.

You may boldly tell mee your  
mind secretly. Lo, wee two be heere  
alone; neither I with lightnesse, nor  
you with arrogancie are delighted,  
but in him which hath giuen vs vn-  
derstanding, euen of him will wee  
speake.

And if happely he come while wee  
are talking, let vs giue place, and let  
him be betweene vs. If he vouchsafe  
to speake, let vs heare him gladly, and  
be silent till hee haue done. At which  
time you shal not be bound to satisfie  
my demands. For when he speaketh,  
all flesh must be still.

S, This couenant I like well. On-  
ly let him bee with vs, and bee wee  
carried vnto our secret places. Let  
him be the guide of our speech, and  
conduct vs whither our delight is to  
goe.

This beloued of whome you so  
dili-

*The fourth booke*

But a great thing is it which you require at mine handes, and such a thing as I am in doubt whether it may be done or no.

He whom thou seekest, knoweth it right well: for it is not in mee to let thee know so much.

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 M. And will you not? Oh, how faine would I bee instructed! For those things we are most earnest to know, which the most hardlie maie bee

reuea-

*of the Imitation of Christ.*

reuealed.

Notwithstanding, once againe I praie you bee not so hard, as altogether to be silent.

Thinke not ~~that~~ forthwith I will vtter what you shall saie, vnto our enemies. I will keepe your saying as a friend, yea, as a very friend ought to doe.

You may boldly tell mee your mind secretly. Lo, wee two be heere alone; neither I with lightnesse, nor you with arrogancie are delighted, but in him which hath giuen vs vnderstanding, euen of him will wee speake.

And if happely he come while wee are talking, let vs giue place, and let him be betweene vs. If he vouchsafe to speake, let vs heare him gladly, and be silent till hee haue done. At which time you shal not be bound to satisfie my demands. For when he speaketh, all flesh must be still.

S, This couenant I like well. Only let him bee with vs, and bee wee carried vnto our secret places. Let him be the guide of our speech, and conduct vs whither our delight is to goe.

This beloued of whome you so

*The fourth booke*

diligen. lie enquire, is for his great-  
 nes vnspokeable<sup>a</sup>, for his height and  
 glorie incomprehensible<sup>b</sup>; for his  
 strength and magnificence infinite<sup>c</sup>.  
 Whatsoeuer is either spoken or writ-  
 ten of him, commeth far behinde his  
 maiestie, because in glorie he excel-  
 leth all things.

The heauens haue said, He hath  
 ouerpasse, and ascended, and pre-  
 uailed ouer vs<sup>d</sup>.

The earth hath answered, If the  
 heauens, and the heauens of hea-  
 uens doo not comprehend him, aske  
 not me of him<sup>e</sup>.

The starres haue sung; Wee are  
 darknesse and not light, vnlesse hee  
 inlighten vs<sup>f</sup>.

The sea trembled, and sayd, Hee is  
 not in mee, and the deepe knoweth  
 him not.

Heare you what they say?

I heard, and was sore troubled; at  
 their voice my very lips trembled.

What then will become of thee if  
 wee should aske him? Let vs speake  
 vnto him.

O Lord, art thou hee of whome  
 the Prophets haue prophecied, and  
 whose commandment all things in  
 their seasons doo obey?

Verely

*of the Imitation of Christ.*

Verely I am that I am; & God.

besides mee there is none o-<sup>Ex. 3. 14</sup>  
ther God<sup>h</sup>; I am the begin-<sup>Deut. 4.</sup>  
ning and the ending<sup>i</sup>; I am<sup>35</sup>  
the creator<sup>k</sup>, and the gouer-<sup>psal. 18. 31</sup>  
nor<sup>l</sup> of all things. I liue saith<sup>Isai. 45. 21</sup>  
the Lord, and I wil raigne for<sup>Reue. 1. 8</sup>  
euer and euer.<sup>Isai. 42. 9</sup>  
<sup>Act 17. 24</sup>

Now I tle worme what saiest thou,<sup>Heb. 1. 3</sup>  
being inuironed with such light?<sup>Iohn 5. 17</sup>  
SOYLE.

Lo, thy beloued, whome thou  
thoughtest was with mee, speaketh  
vnto thee.

Hee was with mee when I said<sup>m</sup>,<sup>ps. 73. 28</sup>  
*For me it is good to draw neere vnto God.*  
Hee will bee with thee, if thou also  
wilt say,<sup>n</sup> *My soule refuseth comfort:*<sup>psa. 77. 2</sup>  
*the dry of my serie I desire not<sup>o</sup>, for thou*<sup>Jer. 17. 16</sup>  
*art my king and my God<sup>p</sup>.*<sup>psal. 5. 2</sup>

Bee not like to raging louers, but  
loue God alone, seeke him alone,  
which admitteth no companion of  
the world into his fellowship.

Talke thou only with him, and  
though he depart, leauing the roome  
void, beare all things patientlie: For  
his woont is to goe and to come, to  
prooue his frie d, and make him  
perfect

*The fourth booke*

perfect in louing.

If thou desire his presence, beare his absence patiently. Waite, and wayte agayne, hee will depart for a while, and after a while he wil againe returne.

Loue maketh thee thus affected, which now heaueth thee on high, and straight way flingeth to the ground againe.

His loue is than all floures sweeter; than lilies fairer; & brighter than the pretious stones.

For no creature is to bee preferred before the loue of God <sup>q</sup>, and therefore for that euery thing is to be despised <sup>r</sup>.

<sup>q</sup> Mat. 10. 37  
<sup>r</sup> Mat. 16. 26  
Luke 9. 25

So soone as I was touched inwardly with his loue, I forthwith began so to be inflamed in my minde, that bidding adieu to all things in the world, I onely wished for his most pure embracements, & as it were bearing hot coales out of a burning Oven, I vttered these words, which but few doe vse <sup>r</sup>.

psa. 73. 25  
26

*Whome haue I in heauen but thee; and I haue desired none in the earth with thee, God is the strength of mine head and my portion for euer.*

By these, gather now of thy beloved

*of the Imitation of Christ.*

ued, what manner a one and what hee is, which incomprehensibly exceedeth all the things which are, and haue being.

And although hee can neyther by words bee vttered, nor conceiued in minde, because he is infinite : yet is he very louely, tractable, fellowly, and to be intreated, insomuch as though he cannot be comprehended, yet after a strange manner hee may bee loued.

For by loue hee is taken, yea by loue fast bounden : but by desire, hee is sought ; by prayer, knocked at ; and by hope attained.

If as yet I haue not satisfied you, let him, whome you haue sought, satisfie you, and teache you, aboue all teachers, to finde himselfe.



## The fourth booke

## Chap. 2.

1. Of God his distinct iudgement  
at the end of this wor'd. 2. The cursed  
state of the vngodly.



Kit mine heart  
vnto thee, O Lord,  
that I may faide thy  
name.

ps. 8. 11

O my God, thou  
art much to bee lo-

ps. 96. 4

ued, yea, and to bee feared much  
thou art.

Hee that loueth, let him bee glad;  
but hee that loueth not thee, let  
him quake and feare. But he which  
neither doth feare thee, nor loue  
thee, is viterly foolish and frantike.  
For, it is a fearefull thing to fall into  
thine hands.

He. 10. 31

And, who knoweth the power of thy  
wrath? Or, who may abide the day

ps. 90. 11

Mal. 2. 3

of thy comming vnto iudgement?

Isai. 5. 30

For, thy roaring shall bee like a  
Lion; and thy glittering sword  
like a consuming fire.

At the sound of thy voyce all the  
dwellers in the world shall bee mo-  
ued; and when thou comest, all  
the foundations of the earth shall  
shake.



*of the Imitation of Christ.*

shake 8.

g 2. Pet. 3. 7

Reuel. 6. 14

Who then but will feare? O by  
what meanes can any escape thine  
hands?

h Psal. 139. 7

8. &amp;c.

If a man will hide himselfe vpon  
the strong rock<sup>i</sup>, thou wilt thunder i<sup>i</sup> Isai. 2. 19  
there-vpon, and it shal rent asunder. 20. &c.

And if he lurke in ciues, or moun-  
taines, he shal be plucked out<sup>b</sup>, and  
be made to sustaine thy displeasure<sup>c</sup>,  
because hee cared not for thy fa-  
uour.

k Hose. 10. 3

Luk. 3. 30

1. Reuel. 6. 16

17

Reuel. 9. 6

Surelie there is no place which  
can hide man from thy presence<sup>m</sup>.

m Iob. 23. 10

Psal. 139. 7

8. &amp;c.

For all things are naked and open  
in thine eyes<sup>n</sup>; thou seest the heart<sup>n</sup> Heb. 4. 13  
and the reins<sup>o</sup>, and beholdest the op<sup>o</sup> psal. 7. 9  
most secret affections of the thought,  
so that no secret is hid from thine  
cies<sup>p</sup>.

p Eccles. 23

verse 19

20

O how terrible wilt thou bee to  
sinners, and to the harts that bee har-  
dened<sup>q</sup>, which now doo glorie in<sup>q</sup> Prou. 1. 24  
ill dooing, and triumph in wicked-  
nes, saying, *The Lord seeth not<sup>r</sup>*, hee<sup>r</sup> psal. 10. 14  
will not regard<sup>s</sup>.

s psal. 94. 7

They are so puffed vp with vaine  
words, as though thou wouldest ne-  
uer come: yea, they turne awaie  
their eies, that they may not see the  
ende.

But :

*The fourth booke*

But in the houre that they thinke  
 not, thou wilt come <sup>e</sup>, and they shall  
 be taken in the snares <sup>u</sup> of their owne  
 wickednesse. And as theeues and rob-  
 bers beeing suddenly taken are con-  
 founded: so shall they bee put to con-  
 fusion, at their due time.

Then wilt thou haue them in deri-  
 sion <sup>x</sup>, which now deride thy seruants;  
 and euill shall bee rendered vnto such  
 as haue abhorred thy righteous-  
 nesse.

Now they stoppe their eares vnto  
 thy voice; but the time shall come,  
 when they shall crie and not bee  
 heard.

Now they turne thy word into a  
 fable: but themselues shall be turned  
 y <sup>Mat. 25, 4</sup> into a flame of fire <sup>v</sup>. For thy  
 word shall goe out with an horrible  
 blasphemie; and it shall strike the wicked  
 and Vnbelceuers without all mer-  
 cie.

What will the proude person saie  
 then, so puffed vp with knowledge,  
 and swelling in power? What an-  
 swere will hee make, when the last  
 trumpe shall sounde in his eares <sup>2</sup>?  
 When thou Lord, our God, shalt ap-  
 peare in Maiesty, together with thine  
 Angels <sup>a</sup> and Archangels <sup>b</sup>?  
 Then

<sup>2</sup> 1. Cor. 15  
 verse 52  
<sup>a</sup> Mat. 24. 31  
<sup>b</sup> 1. Thess. 4.  
 verse. 16

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*of the Imitation of Christ.*

Then all the vngodlie deriders of thy word shall bee husht; and they which haue molested thy seruants, <sup>e Wisd. 5.2</sup> stricken with an horrible feare. 3. &c.

Then shall they vtterly bee confounded, which laying a good conscience and honestye aside, gaue themselues to vanitie and wantonnes.

They shall suffer punishment then, which haue loosed the bridle vnto the flesh.

Then shall they roare towards heauen, which now are cunning in vaine musick and daunces:

Then shall that bee turned into mourning, which hath bin contracted by inordinate pleasure:

They shall be bound vp in bundles together to be burned then<sup>d</sup>, which haue beene companions together at dronkennes and bellie-cheere. And whome loue hath bound in wickednes, the reuenging fire shall roule together in torments. <sup>d Mat. 13.41</sup>  
42, 43

O ye foolish, and wretched, O ye frantike, and blinde louers of the world, what doe yee, what is your meaning? how will yee escape the vengeance of the Lord?

Why for a little pleasure which  
you

*The fourth booke*

you doe loue, do ye hasten vnto e-  
 lasting torments? Why feare ye not  
 hell, which do so feare a little penance?  
 And, you which flie the death of the  
 flesh, why aforehand doe ye not take  
 heede of the eternall death of the  
 soule?

Vnlesse therefore yee doe conuert,  
 and repent, ye shall neuer escape these  
 horrible and fierie torments of Gods  
 displeasure.

When I consider the day and heure  
 of the generall iudgment, my bones  
 doe shake for feare, because intreatie  
 then shall not turne away the wrath of  
 God, but he will be a righteous iudge  
 to all.

Act. 10. 42.

2. Tim. 4. 8

Hebr. 12. 23

O God most holie, mightie, and  
 mercifull Sauiour, saue me from that  
 bitter death, and giue me grace to re-  
 pent, that I may vnfeinedly bewaile  
 my sinnes before I depart out of this  
 present world.



CHAP

*of the Imitation of Christ.*

## CHAP. 3.

1. An humble confession of sins ;
2. with a Prayer for grace  
to repent.



My sorrowe is ever be-  
fore me <sup>a</sup>.

a Psa. 3. 17

O my God, for-  
ie haue I spotted  
my life with mani-  
fold sinnes : but ,  
Lord, beholde my  
teares which I shead before thee, be-  
cause I haue so much offended thine  
holines.

For I know that in mee, that is, in  
my flesh dwelleth no good thing <sup>b</sup> ; & b Ren. 7. 18  
that so long as I carrie about a mor-  
tall bodie, I am not free from wicked-  
nes <sup>c</sup>.

c W. 9. 15

I therefore doe sinne, and offend  
day by daies ; & which is more lament-  
able, I suffer many sins to passe away  
without sorrow and due repentance.

For being busie most commonlie,  
and encombred with affaires of the  
world, and vaine curiosities, I am not  
able so speedilie to returne vnto  
wholesome peares. Whereof it is that  
the darkenes of sinne doth encrease  
so

*The fourth booke*

so mightilie against mee, the which  
both stop vp the fountaines of grace,  
and hinder the streames of heauenlie  
comfort from comming vnto me.

LORD. And is that a small of-  
fence?

SOVLE. No, my God, it is a great  
sinne, and so much the greater, as it  
passeth the sooner from the heart,  
and doth not pricke mee with sor-  
rowe.

But, Lord, wilt thou not regard  
this my wicked dealing? How long  
shall I delude thee, and thus deceiue  
my selfe!

Wilt thou alwaie be silent? where  
is thy rod? where is thy spur? where  
is thy wand?

O Lorde, why doest thou with-  
drawe thy iudgement, and the paines  
of hell from mine eies?

Were these things alwaies in my  
remembrance, could I bee so retch-  
lesse?

d Wis, 11. 20,  
1. Pet. 3. 9 /  
e Wis, 12. 10

Thy silence and patience is for  
mine amendment <sup>a</sup>: but if I still bee  
negligent, wilt thou not then punish  
mee seuerely <sup>e</sup>? Surely thou wilt  
punish mee, if not in this world, yet  
in the world to come.

For nothing shall passe awaie vn-  
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*of the Imitation of Christ.*

reunited, neither small, neither great offence.

But much better heere in this world, where both weeping is profitable, the paine is short, the satisfaction more accepted, and reconciliation sooner had.

And therefore spare not the rod; but with a sharpe water annointe mine eyes, and reserve not my finnes vntill the time to come; least then I bee deliuered vnto the tormenters vntill I haue paid the vtmost farthing.

Better it is now a little for my profit to bee pricked, than hereafter to feele the bitter paines of hell fire. FMatt. 5. 26.

Purgatoria.

Wherefore I am to mourne, and to conceiue a great sorrowe for my finnes.

For many things I haue to bewaile, but no cause at all to laugh.

The darkenesse of mine heart, the slipperinesse of my conscience, my pronenesse vnto wickednes, my want of grace, doe with mee, yea rather of necessitie doe enforce mee to weepe and to lament.

Furthermore, the remembrance of manifold temptations, and of assaults

*The fourth booke*

faults to sinne, should make mee haue  
little lust to be merrie.

Spare me, O Lord, spare me.

For though I weepe, beeing touched inwardlie with sorrowe, it is no maruell, because the time is now to weepe.

O happie is the houre, when I conceiue sorrow for my sinnes! Blessed are the teares which doe flow from the griefe of heart, at the consideration of the foulness of a guiltie conscience.

And who is able to sound the bottom of this depth, and to reprove the hidden filthines without feeling?

1 Ioh. 1. 9.

O my God, the true light, thou canst lighten all the obscure places of mine heart; yea and burne vp all the spots thereof, in the spirit of heate, & iudgement.

1 Psa. 51.

10.

It is in thee to giue a newe heart, to create a new spirit, and there to prepare a secret habitation, that it may be a place for thee to rest in, and a tabernacle of thy name, which art the louer of cleanness, & the guest of the good conscience.

But forso much as willinglie thou doest not visite a disordered house,  
but

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*of the Imitation of Christ.*

but commonly leauest the same to be  
illuded with beastly affections, I am  
the more carefull least that betide me.

But helpe me, O mercifull & gra-  
tious God, to repaire the ruins of this  
mine house

Woe to him from whome thou  
departest away offended. But peace  
to him vnto whome thou descendest,  
and with whome thou abidest.

I miserable wretch now placed in  
the midst of snares, and loaden with  
the shackles of wickednes, what coun-  
sell is best for me, or what remedie to  
be vsed, but onely to lift vp mine hea-  
uie eies vnto thee, that my crie may  
be heard in the heauens?

For a polluted conscience shall ne-  
uer finde nor haue a better medicine,  
than bitterlie to slaie it selfe in pray-  
er. And how can extreame tentation  
more profitablie be cured that it pre-  
uaile not, than by powring continuall  
petitions vnto thee, and by humbling  
our selues?

But who can giue mee these blef-  
sings? I mean to praie and to weepe  
as I ought to doe. VVhere may I

18:2

attaine

*The fourth booke*

attayne that humilitie, and abundance of teares? Doubtlesse of thee

k Iam. I. 17. Lord, with whome is mercie<sup>i</sup>, and great redemption.

1. Psa. 130. 7 O Lord, my God, the giuer of all grace<sup>k</sup>, graunt that I may, as I am bound, bewaile mine offences, seeme they neuer so small, and to amend all without vaine excuses, aswell thote offences which are secret, as those that are well known.

Let this mine heartie repentance get me thy fauour again, and prepare vnto well dooing, and to that which tendeth vnto saluation.



CHAP.



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*of the Imitation of Christ.*

C H A P. 4

1. A lamentation of the soule for her  
weakenes, and vnstaiednes in the  
race of virtue.



*Hine eyes did see*

*mee, when I was without  
forme.*

*Is. 139. 16*

O Lord my GOD,  
what in the ende will  
become of mee, seeing daily I doo  
offend?

When shall I amende my life as I  
ought to doo? When will it bee bet-  
ter with mee? When shall I waxe  
strong? And when shall I over-  
come?

I am cast head-long into the deep  
pit of filthinesse. Who can thinke  
there is yet hope left to arise againe,  
to amend, to goe forward, and to  
come vnto the ende? Surely tou-  
ching my selfe I am out of all hope:  
ah that mine hope were stronger in  
thee!

I greatlie dooe despaire, because  
my weakenes encreaseth through  
long troubles; and I see no ende of  
my sorrow, and sinne.

C I

And

*The fourth booke*

And though I saie, lo nowe I will  
begin to amend; lo it is nowe time,  
I will dooe my best to reforme my  
selfe, straight-waie, alas, sinne stan-  
deth before mee, the enemie lifteth  
vp himselfe against mee, and wicked  
custome keepeth mee backe with  
might and maine, contrarie to my  
minde.

O Lorde, behold howe I am cast  
downe, and troden vnderfooote: be-  
hold the troubles which I dooe en-  
dure.

Lift vp thy right hand, and deli-  
uer mee fro my persecutors, for they  
are too strong for me <sup>b</sup>.

<sup>b</sup>ps. 142. 6

My wisdome is perished, and my  
strength hath failed me.

Mine arme is broken, neither can  
my sword saue me <sup>c</sup>.

<sup>c</sup>ps. 44. 6

I see not vnto whom I may flie;  
and that will receiue and heale me,  
I know none.

Thou alone continuest my refuge:  
but I dare not approach for shame,  
because I haue offended thee.

I haue sinned O God; forgine me.  
I am sorie, yea heartily sorie that e-  
uer I did transgresse thy lawes.

Giue mee that which seemeth  
right in thine eyes, and bee merci-  
full.

*of the Imitation of Christ.*

full.

Thou diddest iustlie in forsaking me, and iustlie thou diddest commit mee into the hands of mine aduersarie

But Lord, remember that which thou hast made, amende that which is decayed, for of it selfe it can neuer stande.

Marke my groaning, and my troubles: let the paine and griefe of mine heart at no time be out of thy remembrance.

O mercifull Father, cast an eye vpon my thraldome and imprisonmēt, vpon the miserie and crueltie which I doe endure; and bring mee out that am bound, from the prison house and wretched bondage.

Though a man should liue many yeares, what will hee bee the better thereby? And who knoweth whether he shall amend his wicked life, or bee worse and worse?

Man woteth not howe he shall proceede, and ende; and his continuance is verie doubtfull, because of the manifold chances of euils, & dangerous tentations.

Manie at their first conuersion from sinne, are good and humble,

C 2 which

*The fourth booke*

which afterwarde become frowarde and rebellious. At the first they were modest and deuoute, zealous and silent, and in the end prooued carelesse, & dissolute, babblers, and barbarous. And they which at the beginning did bridle their wicked affections, at the length had scarce any care at all either what they said or did. And so by little & little wickednes taketh roote and encreaseth while it is not preuented at the beginning.

Who therefore but should feare, and be circumspect, seeing such vn-luckie chances doe come vnto the good and modest?

Again, who thoroughlie dooth knowe whether he be elected, or hath strength to beare all things?

d Act. 14.22

Wee are all to be tried, and who is sure that he shall not be burned, seeing temptation is a fire.

e 1. Pet. 1.7

So that all must feare, and hope alike of the better: but none is rashly to presume, nor yet proudly to bee secure.

f Prov. 17.3.

In deede the gold which is tried, shall be preserued: but I aduise thee, O man, to consider well of what metall thou art.

The

*of the Imitation of Christ.*

The celestiall purger will purge, he  
will fine the sonnes of Leui<sup>s</sup>, euen all  
that are his seruants<sup>b</sup>, g Mal. 3. 3  
h 2. Tim. 3  
verse 12

It is not alwaies gold, which hath  
the colour of gold; neither is it al-  
way stubble, or naughtie siuer, which  
endureth beating, and beareth the  
staile. For God<sup>d</sup> beholdeth the verie  
cogitations and the hearts<sup>i</sup>, by them i Psalm. 7. 9  
most commonly working wonders,  
which in the opinion of many are but  
cast-awaies.

O Lord God, what ioy can I haue  
in this world, when I thinke vpon the  
vncertaintie<sup>k</sup>, and frailtie of all  
things vnder heauen? k 2. Pet. 3. 7  
Psa. 102. 25  
16

Notwithstanding this am I sure of,  
that thou art good, & that thy mercy  
is from generation to generation on  
them that feare thee<sup>l</sup>. l Luke. 1. 50.

For thine infinite goodnesse and  
mercie, is greater than all my sinnes.

And this shall bee my comfort,  
while thou giuest me space  
to amend my  
life.

*The fourth booke*

## CHAP. 5.

1. Of the shortnesse and miserie of  
*this present life.* 2. A prayer for  
 grace to renounce the  
 world, and the vanities  
 of the same.



Et me vnderstand the  
 shortnes of my dayes.  
 So long as I am in this  
 worlde, I am wicked <sup>a</sup>:  
 and while I continue

<sup>a</sup> Job. 14. 4

<sup>b</sup> Heb. 11. 13 vpon the earth, I am poore, a stran-  
 ger, and a pilgrime <sup>b</sup>.

<sup>c</sup> 1. Tim. 6. 7. I brought nothing into the world <sup>c</sup>,  
 and certaine it is I can carie nothing  
 thereout: for naked came I out of my  
<sup>d</sup> Job. 1. 31, mothers wombe <sup>d</sup>, and naked shall I  
 returne thither againe.

As a shadow which passeth away, &  
 as a feather which is tossed vp and  
 downe with the winde: and as a guest  
 of one night, so suddenly shall I passe  
 away.

All the time wee haue heere to  
 liue, is but as the shortest night.  
<sup>e</sup> Gen. 47. 9 Fewe and euill are my dayes <sup>e</sup>, and  
 after a little while they shall ende,  
 and bee as though they had neuer  
 beene



*of the Imitation of Christ.*

beene.

And when man is dead, what is in man but filthines? Who will haue any care of a stinking carcase? Or who will enquire of the absent being dead, whereas being aliue hee was accounted of.

A small while is man remembred either of his friends, or of strangers: but vndoubtedly the righteous shall bee had in euerlasting remembrance<sup>1</sup>, because hee shall bee euerlastingly linked to GOD, who is alwaies the same, and shall neuer die<sup>2</sup>.

g Pl. 102. 27

Therefore happie is he which putteth no trust in man; nor yet reioyceth in any worldly thing, but hath his hart fixed in heauen<sup>3</sup>: for what soeuer is in this worlde, is transitory<sup>4</sup> and vaine.

i 2. Pet. 3. 7.

psa. 102. 25.

26

Call into thy minde those which haue liued since the worlde began, 1. Cor. 7. 31. vntill now, and tell, I pray thee, 2 Iohn. 2. 17 where they bee? And those whom you see and heare to liue now, how long thinkest thou will they endure?

Say therefore of all, Euerie man that liueth, is but vanity<sup>5</sup>.

O miserable and wretched life! k Ps. 49. 5

C 4

O

*The fourth booke*

O fraile, and lamentable life, which good men doe suffer rather than desire: and wicked men, albe they desire it, yet can they not long enioie the same!

Oh, vanitie of this world, when wilt thou haue an ende? when wilt thou cease!

Yet the time will come, when all the elect shall be set free from the  
 1 Rom. 8. 23 bondage of corruption<sup>1</sup>, though now  
 23 they doe lament, because they are estranged from the kingdom of Christ  
 m Psal. 1. 23. m.

Would to God, the whole worlde would euen wither vp in mine heart; and my Lord GOD, euen mine immortal spouse, seeme sweete vnto my soule!

Vndoubtedly, the fleeting ioy of this present life, is but a false and a most bitter potion. Let them drinke thereof that list, for afterward they shall feelee a most bitter flixe. And the more one hath drunke therof, the sharper shall his torments be, because the whole pleasure of this world shall more speedilie passe awaie than the  
 a Wisd. 5. 8 winde<sup>2</sup>, and leaue to their louers  
 9. &c. paines and burnings<sup>3</sup>.  
 e Luk. 16. 35

Therefore, out of my sight thou deceipt-

*of the Imitation of Christ.*

deceitfull glory of the world, and  
all foolish pleasure of the flesh.

Manie you doo drawe, and de-  
ceiue: but in the end you leaue and  
destroiethem.

1. Ioh. 3. 15  
16, 17

Woe to them which beleue thee;  
woe to them which bee there drown-  
ed.

But come, and come nigh mee,  
most holy humility; and the full re-  
nouncing of all worldly pompes; and  
neuer doe thou leaue me, o thou  
sweete remembrance of my present  
pilgrimage.

What am I but ashes, and earth? <sup>9</sup> *Reclus. 10*  
and whither tende I, but towards <sup>verse</sup> **9**  
earth?

1 Gen. 3. 19

Oh, how wretched am I become!  
howe iustly may I lament, when I  
think vpon my pilgrimage, & howe <sup>f</sup> *Heb. 11. 13*  
little I am priuie howe I shall end the  
same!

If I liue well, and continue so,  
there is no cause whie I should feare  
an euill death. But who can glorie  
of a good life, and of a pure consci-  
ence? Hee which knoweth himselfe  
to be such a one, let him reioyce in  
the Lord, and take compassion vp- <sup>t</sup> *1. cor. 1. 31*  
on me a sinner.

To liue I haue no desire, because <sup>u</sup> *Phil. 2. 23*

*The fourth booke*

miserie enuironeth mee on euery side:  
to die, an euill conscience is affraide;  
for, to answere God, it hath not one  
for a thousand.

x Iob. 9. 3

The Prophet was not so in feare  
y psa. 108. 1 which saide ⁊, *Mine heart is prepared,*  
O God, my heart is prepared.

O Lord, the God of my saluation,  
let my life come vnto a good ende;  
and prolong not the daies of my la-  
mentation. With sorrow I came into  
this prison; and without griefe I shall  
not get out.

S. Long doo I thinke this life; and  
therather, because of the continuall  
miserie and troubles which I finde  
therein: but in trueth it is not long,  
for it passeth awaie more swiftlie than  
a Poste.

x Iob. 9. 35

a Eccles. 4. 1

2

To a man that liueth in paine and  
miserie, all time is long, and hee  
counteth a daie for a yere. This  
maketh my life tedious vnto mee,  
and so much the more it dooth  
trouble me, as the more truely I  
consider all the miseries of the  
same.

But, if happelicanie consolations  
and ioie come betweene, it standeth  
mee vpon to looke about whether  
they be of God, or no. If they be

of

*of the Imitation of Christ.*

of God, I accept them gladly, but yet I knowe not how long they will continue: yet howe shorte soeuer they bee, they like and please mee well.

But, would to God hee would powre them largely vpon me; and cause them to continue with mee a long while!

But the ioyes and pleasures which are not of God, are vile and vading, albeit to the shewe they appeare sweet and pleasant.

Thus, euen thus passeth away this life, replenished continuallie both with good and euill things.

Therefore so long as I line in this world, I am a poore pilgrime <sup>b</sup>. <sup>b</sup> Heb. 11

I cannot truly say I haue enough, 13  
because presently there is satietie <sup>c</sup> Eccles. 1  
of no good thing <sup>c</sup>, but the good 8  
thing which I looke for, thou art <sup>d</sup>, <sup>d</sup> ps. 119. 57  
in whome I belecue:

So that when thy glorie hath appeared, and replenished mee, then, euen then I will acknowledge, that I haue enough. But in the meane while, because this worde is hidden fro mee, much grieve and sorrowe dooth inuiron my soule.

And therefore being mindfull  
of

No happines but in heauen.

36

Chap. 5

*The fourth booke*

of thine holie saying, I reparate this  
e Mat. 26, 38 oftentimes, *My soule is verie heauy;  
euen vnto the death.*

VVell were it with me, if this houre  
were come, and that neither grieue  
nor sorrow did possesse me!

But, Lord, I beseech thee, let thy  
goodnes conserue me.



Chap.

*of the Imitation of Christ.**Chap. 6.*

1. An ardent desire of the soule to  
be loosed from sin, and from the troubles  
of this world,



*Bring my soule out  
of prison.*

<sup>a</sup>ps. 142. 7

The grearines of my  
sorrow will not suffer  
me to be still.

For why doo I yet liue in this  
world? I knowe not what I can dooe  
heere.

Slowlie, God hee knoweth, I goe  
forward in virtue; nay woulde to  
God I went not backward!

O Lord, what a pleasure shouldest  
thou dooe me, if speedilie thou  
wouldest take mee out of this life,  
that a woorser thing come not vnto  
mee<sup>b</sup>.

<sup>b</sup>Iob, 5. 14

My life, alas, sigheth in paine  
and in wel-dooing amendeth not.

If thou looke for my conuersion, I  
repent not by the same, but doo a-  
buse thy long suffering; if thou pu-  
nish mee, I doo hardly show pati-  
ence, because thou purtuelt drie  
thub-

*The fourth booke*

c Iob. 13, 25 stubble c.

Why then doost thou not quite take away thy seruant ? Whie do I liue vpon the earth ? that is , whie dooe I dwell among good people, and yet reforme not my life and manners ? Why, so vnworthilie and dangerously keepe I the place of some better person, and yet walke so careleslie and so coldly, in this life ?

Thus powre I out this wofull thing which I consider of , in the eares of my God.

Yet, gracious Lord, crie not out in thine anger against me, *cut downe the tree* <sup>d</sup>, and cast it into the fire.

d Luk. 13. 7

I accuse mine infirmitie before thee, that I may finde grace in thy sight through my confession.

e Dan. 9. 9

It is my part to accuse , but it belongeth vnto thee to shew mercie c.

It is my part to weepe and to sigh bitterly ; but it belongeth vnto thee Lord, mercifullie to comfort.

Wherefore , my Lord and God, either giue mee more grace in this life, or take me speedily out of this world , that the rent bee not woorser.

For to liue long, and not to cease from



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from ill liuing, is but to augment the punishment of hell.

Neither can I awaite with such a life as knoweth neither how to proceede in virtue, nor to bewaile wickednes.

For that partie which leadeth an holy and righteous life, is grieved at the heart whensoever he offendeth; and that hee may in grace and virtue increase more and more, it is alwaies his desire.

VVhat shall he dooe which knoweth himselfe daily to offend; and that his flesh greivously dooth rise against the spirit? who also being overcome with tediousnesse sometime, and cooled with negligence and idlenesse, dooth giue over to resist, or else laying aside the spirituall weapons<sup>f</sup>, doth follow the swinge of the flesh, whither his owne will doth draw him? Ephes. 6. 11

Alas, Lorde and God, such a one alas draweth nigh vnto the gates of death; and liuing in the flesh, runneth into the death of the soule.

Oh, how is euerie one to take heede, that hee be not seduced and supplanted of the enemies! g 1. pet. 5. 8  
h Mat. 6. 13

No man is sure from temptation

no

*The fourth booke*

1 Iob. 14. 4 no man is pure from sinne<sup>i</sup> ; but all  
 psal. 51. 5. 7 the sort of vs are fraile<sup>k</sup> .

k Iam. 3. 2 But, Lord, thou which art almighty<sup>l</sup>, and knowest all things<sup>m</sup>, raise  
 1 Iob. 13. 3 v<sup>p</sup> the broken in heart ; and cleanse  
 m Eccles. 23 the vncleane from all filthines, re-  
 verse 19 nue a newe spirit within his bowels,  
 Est. 13. 12 that all faintnes and lasinesse may  
 leaue him, that spirituall zeale may  
 returne, and that thy loue may con-  
 tinue vnmoueable within him vnto  
 the end.

For hee onely wanteth thine assi-  
 stance, who is peised downe with his  
 n Wis. 9. 13 owne waight<sup>n</sup> ; neither is hee able  
 to cast off the load of sinne, vntill  
 thou sende strength from heauen of  
 power to loose the hard fetters of car-  
 nall affections.

And this my request is to obtaine ;  
 for without thy speciall grace, wee  
 shall neither leade a good life in this  
 world, nor liue eternallie in the life  
 o Rom. 6. 23 to come<sup>o</sup>.

And whereas I now liue in the bo-  
 die, it is no ioie to mee ; for better it  
 p phil. 1. 23 were for mee to die, than to liue<sup>p</sup>,  
 because through this life I am de-  
 barred the farder from eternall life,  
 which cannot come, vnlesse that  
 death doo destroe the life present,  
 yea

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yea and death also it selfe be destroyed.

Hence it is that my desire is to heaven-ward, and mine heart seeking eternall rest, fetcheth deepe sighes, and cryeth:

It is now enough Lord, take away my soule, which thou hast redeemed with thy pretious blood.

Open to me the gate of thy kingdom, and let in a poore pilgrime, returning vnto thee from exile.

q 1. Pet. 1.  
18.19

1 Heb. 11.  
13

Listen to me, Lord, and loose me from the band of the body.

What should I longer doe here? I am good neither to my selfe, nor to others.

(Phil. 1.23)

Whiethen doe I liue? To my selfe I am burdensome, to others troublesome.

What shall become of mee? I wot not, Lord, whether thou hast fore-seene any better thing of me, wherefore my longing should be lingred.

I doe allowe thine ordinance, because it is good: but in mee onely I finde the euill, why it grieveth and troubleth me to liue in the world.

For dailie I doe sinne; I heape sinne vpon sinne, and yet as I ought,

I

*The fourth booke*

I repent not.

**t Rom. 6. 6** If therefore I were loosed from this bodie of sinne <sup>t</sup>, and coupled to thee in heauen, neither should I offendanie more, nor thou be offended, but be praised continually.

**u 2. Pet. 8. 9,** Notwithstanding as yet thou bearest with mee <sup>u</sup>, and shewest all patience.

**x Ephes. 5. 5** I know my fault; because through my sinnes I may not enter into thy kingdome. For none vncleane thing shall enter thereinto <sup>x</sup>.

**Reue. 22. 15,**

But when shall I be without sinne? When shall I throughlie bee cleansed, that I may not feare to be prohibited, but reioice rather to be let in?

If I goe not forward more zealouslie, nor be more carefull than hitherto I haue bin, I am affraide, mine hope will be little enough.

**y 1. Tim. 2. 4.** But Lord, thou which wilt that no man should perish <sup>y</sup>, but that all should bee saued, graunt mee more grace to the amendment of my life; and to hope for celestiall blessings, giue mee the spirit of inwarde fastnesse.

**z Pet. 3. 9**

Let not mine heart heere reioice after the flesh; but in fearing let it expect

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expect for death.

Let no care or creature hold mee  
backe: but let thy desired presence  
drawe and comfort me.

Blessed is the man which trusteth <sup>2 psa. 37. 34</sup>  
in thee O Lord <sup>2</sup>: but more blessed <sup>psa. 37. 14</sup>  
is he that is passed out of this wicked  
worlde, for he shall no more either  
feele or feare any trouble <sup>2</sup>.

<sup>2</sup>Reu. 7. 17  
Reu. 21. 4



Chap.

*The fourth booke*

## CHAP. 7.

## I. A godlie desire for a good death.

a Psal. 71. 5.



*Lord, thou art mine  
hope euen from my youth <sup>a</sup>.*

In this hope I fly vn-  
to thee, vntill the last  
houre and time of my

resolution shall come.

Oh that I were so well prepared,  
that I might euen now die vnder the  
hope of grace!

Oh that I had ended this life  
with an happie departure; and laied  
off the load of this bodie <sup>b</sup>; howe  
many dangers and feares had I then  
escaped!

Happie is the man whome thou  
hast chosen, and taken vp, who is now  
gone out of this worlde vnto the fa-  
ther <sup>c</sup>; from banishment, vnto a king-  
dome <sup>d</sup>; from the prison vnto the pa-  
lace <sup>e</sup>; from darkenesse vnto light <sup>f</sup>;  
from death vnto life <sup>g</sup>; vnto security  
from dangers <sup>h</sup>; from labour vnto  
rest <sup>i</sup>; and from all maner miseries vn-  
to euerlasting felicitie <sup>k</sup>.

Happie is the soule that now en-  
ioyeth

c Mat. 5. 48,

d Ma 25. 34

e Phil. 1. 23

f Reue. 22. 5

g Reu. 21. 6

h Reu. 7. 16

i

k Reu. 14. 23,

l Reu. 22. 5

*of the Imitation of Christ.*

ioyeth her rewarde, triumphing in thee her Lord!

But, alas that my countrie is so long kept from me!

IPsal. I 20, 5

How graciouslie and mercifullie shouldest thou deale with me, if quickly I were called away, and bidden to come vnto thee, that where thou art I might be also!

Oh that I had beene taken out of this worlde, before euer I had knowen the filthines of the same, and before I was afraide to offend euen in small things; how happie then had I bin! But now the longer heere I liue, the more I wander from thee, & doe sin in too too manie things.

Woe is mee, what haue I doone? Alas, I haue followed the desires of the flesh, and haue drawne vanitie to my selfe with roapes, but godlinesse I haue abandoned, abhorred innocencie, and added sinne vnto sinne: so that now to my griefe I finde that true which I haue sometime read<sup>m</sup>, *Woe be to the wicked, it shall be euill with him.*

m. Isai. 3, 11

Too too late almost I haue returned vnto my GOD, yea verie late it was ere I began to amend, and then too

*The fourth booke*

too but slowlie went I on; I was not zealous enough in my proceeding, I did not encrease in zeale; but, which is woorser, I waxed cooler and cooler.

Hence it was that many times I was verie loath to die, because my guiltie conscience still tolde me I had not liued as I should haue done.

Notwithstanding, in consideration of the dangerous temptations (whereunto I am subiect) and that my sinnes might not encrease, many a time haue I wished for death; and into these wordes haue I burst, saying:

Oh that now God in mercie would take mee out of this worlde, that I might sinne no more vpon earth! Oh that God speedily would vouchsafe to take mee away, and make an end of my labours; in what an happie state should I then be!

But, Lord, all things must bee euen as thou wilt. If thou minde to do that which I require, it shall forthwith be accomplished: but if otherwise, thy will be done.

I may vtter out my desire, and the miserie which I endure, not as  
to



*of the Imitation of Christ.*

to him which is ignorant thereof,  
but that thereby I may finde some  
comfort to my sou'e.

I knowe I am not yet ready as I  
ought to bee, for my conscience is  
greatly out of quiet.

And what maruell though I, a sin-  
ner, doe stand in feare, seeing many  
euen of the holie fathers were afraid,  
because thou iudgeth not as man  
dorth <sup>11</sup>.

But how shall I prepare my selfe? It  
were good for mee to prepare my  
selfe against that time, which may  
come this daie before to morrow for  
any thing I know.

n 1. Sam. 16  
17  
Iohn. 8. 15.  
16

Therefore I will more firmly al-  
ter my purpose; I will bewaile all my  
negligences passed; I will sacrifice  
my self to thee; and wholly & hence-  
forth commend my selfe vnto thy  
mercy, O Lord.

O Lord, my God, all my works do  
stand at thy mercie °; and without ° Eph. 1. 6. 7  
thy mercie I haue no merits. And  
this is mine hope, this is all my trust.

But how fareth it with a good and  
pure conscience? What saith the  
chaste, and deuoute soule? Come,  
saith thee, Lord Iesus ⁊, O come, and  
tarie

p Reu. 22. 10

*The fourth booke*

tary not; vntie my finnes, loose my  
fettlers, bring me out of prison, out of  
the lake of miserie, and mirie clay.

9 Psa. 40. 2

I haue waited patientlie for thee,  
1. O Lord, incline to me and heare my  
crie: Leau me not any longer in this  
wicked world.

Let it content thee that hitherto  
I haue strinen, that so long I haue bin  
in exile; that I haue not deserued to  
enioy thee, nor to see thee face to  
face.

2 1. Cor. 13,  
verse. 12.

Reuel, 22. 4

Graunt me to enioy the long desi-  
red ioy, which no time shall ende, nor  
troubles ouershadow.

Shew mee thy countenance, which  
f Mar, 18. 10. the angels continually do behold.

Let thy voice be heard in mine  
eares, which they without ceassing do  
heare.

Come Lord Iesu, and take me out  
of this forraine countrie; call mee  
wretch home vnto my countrie, and  
13 restore me a sinner vnto my former  
puritie.

2 Heb. 11. 33

f Mar, 1. 21.

Come gracious Redeemer, make  
mee partaker of thine eternall glo-  
rie.

It is his time that I returne vnto  
thee, it is now time that I commend  
my bodie to the earth, whereout it

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x Gen. 2, 7

The matter is not great where the body be laide, or how it be handled, if so be the soule bee safe, and come vnto thee.

Let my spirit doo well, which I commend into thine hands; and let my flesh rest in hope to bee raised vp againe in the last daie <sup>7</sup>. For where- <sup>y 1. Cor. 15.</sup>  
 soeuer it be buried, it can neuer bee <sup>verse 51.</sup>  
 far, or hid from thee. <sup>52, 53</sup>

Remoue from mee the compa-  
 nie of men, and ioyn me to the so-  
 cietie of thy saintes. For this tempo-  
 rall life is irkesome to mee: but to  
 thinke of the day of eternall glorie,  
 reioyceth mine heart.

Oh, let not the olde serpent <sup>x 2 Reue. 12, 9</sup>  
 withstand mee at my departure out  
 of Egypt; let not the enimie barke  
 against mee in the gate: let neither  
 Satan with his ouglie sight terrifie,  
 nor the horror of death trouble mee,  
 but let thine holy angels faithfully  
 assist, stoutly aide, valianly pro-  
 tect, louinglie receiue, and ioiefullie  
 bring mee vnto the euerlasting felici-  
 tie of thy celestiall Paradise.

And mercifull, louely, and ble-  
 sed Iesu, doo thou gratiousslie, I be-  
 seech thee, behold mee; and cast

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me

*The fourth booke*

mee not out of the number of thy  
servants : but remember, O Sonne  
of God, howe thou hast redeemed  
me with thy precious blood <sup>a</sup>.

<sup>a</sup> Eph. 1. 3. 7<sup>b</sup> Pet. 1. 18. 19

Receiue mee into glorie, and thine  
in thy mercy and goodnes, because  
greatly haue I wished to solemnize  
a passeouer with thee.

Oh happie day of my desired re-  
ward! Come blessed houre of bles-  
sed passage, which long I haue desi-  
red, and kept before mine eyes.

What now haue the troubles and  
b Rom. 8. 18 afflictions in the worlde hurt mee <sup>b</sup>?

What am I the worlde for the con-  
tempt, labor, and humiliation for thy  
name sake?

Thou hast bin my life, and nowe  
c Phil. 1. 24 death will be to mee an aduantage <sup>c</sup>,  
and to bee with thee in thy kingdome  
will be absolute felicitie.

<sup>d</sup> Ioh. 11. 25<sup>e</sup> Act. 2. 26

Now praise and glory bee to thee,  
who art the life of such as live <sup>d</sup>, the  
hope of those which die <sup>e</sup>, the  
saluation and rest of all

which trust in  
thee <sup>f</sup>.

Psal. 17. 7

Psal. 34. 8

Pro. 16. 20

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*of the Imitation of Christ.*

**C H A P. 8.**

A Meditation of one dead vnto  
the worlde, yet alive in  
Christ.



*Urne away mine  
eyes from regarding va-  
nitie.*

Oh Iesu, which art apf. 119. 37.  
the true life <sup>b</sup>, which blehn. 11. 5

neuer shall haue ende; giue me grace  
that through loue of thee I may bee  
consumed, through loue wounded,  
through loue killed, that the flesh pre-  
uaile not ouer me.

I am not as yet thoroughly dead to  
the worlde, but the olde man yet li-  
ueth in mee <sup>c</sup>, raising vp within mee c Rom. 7. 23  
much contention, and desires of ma-  
nifold euils, and making the nightes  
bitter, and the dayes tedious vnto  
me.

Oh, when will it fall out, that bold-  
lie I may say, I thought my selfe as a  
dead man? For he which dead is, doth  
weigh neither the praises of men, nor  
the reproches of the malignant, be-  
cause he is dead.

Hee which touching the flesh is  
D 3 dead,

*The fourth booke*

dead, neither speaketh, nor smelleth, nor tasteth, nor exerciseth any work, yea he neither heareth also the vanity of this world: again he regardeth not curious and beautiful things enticing vnto the loue of some vile thing vpon earth.

And he which is dead to the world, is not in the world, but in G O D to whome he liueth; euen as Paule to *Coloss. 3, 3* beloued disciples doth say *4*, *Yee are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.*

This man doth so speake, so think, so behold things without, as though they were not. For the things which *1. Joh. 3, 17* are seene, are temporall, and vaine *5*: but the things which are not seene, *2. Cor. 4, 18* are eternall *6*.

Hither dooth hee cast his eie; hither doth hee hasten; hither is his desire; for these things doth hee labor; to attaine these things is all his studie *7*.

These things hee wisheth, these things hee loueth, these things hee seeketh, these things hee saoureth, euen which are within, and secrete, to wit, great good things, soueraigne, and eternall things, of which hee cannot thinke too often, because they

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they are exceeding pretious, & sweete and delectable, and more than vtterable <sup>h</sup>.

h 1. Cor. 2.9

This man is farre estranged from present things <sup>i</sup>, and breatheth altogether after things eternall <sup>k</sup>, having the dominion over the sensuall appetite,

i Gal. 6. 14  
k Coloss. 3. 2

For the flesh seeketh outward, desireth pleasant, loueth present, loatheth absent, flieth all sharpe and bitter things, which notwithstanding are good for the soule <sup>l</sup>. Whence it commeth that it will not suffer the spirit to be at rest, but layeth before it sundry phantasies, which are scarce to be spoken, and in truth not to bee accounted off.

l Rom. 8. 4  
s. &c.

But hee which is endued with the grace of spirituall fortitude, may with more ease subdue the insolent motions of the flesh, singing in the worde of the diuine power <sup>m</sup>, *The Lorde is with me, therefore I will not feare what flesh can doe vnto me.*

m Psa. 118. 6

Therefore albeit this sensualitie doth moue battell, and the voyce of the flesh doth secretly murmure <sup>n</sup>; yet doth not the spirituall man easilie consent; for greater is the force of the diuine loue which inwardlie

n Rom. 8. 23.

*The fourth booke*

tery not; vntie my finnes, loose my  
fettlers, bring me out of prison, out of  
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It is hie time that I returne vnto  
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y 1. Cor. 15.

verie 51.

52. 53

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Oh, let not the olde serpent <sup>x Reue. 12. 9</sup>  
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<sup>a</sup> Eph. 1. 3. 7  
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nifold euils, and making the nightes  
bitter, and the dayes tedious vnto  
me.

Oh, when will it fall out, that bold-  
lie I may say, I thought my selfe as a  
dead man? For he which dead is, doth  
weigh neither the praises of men, nor  
the reproches of the malignant, be-  
cause he is dead.

Hee which touching the flesh is  
D 3 dead,

*The fourth booke*

dead, neither speaketh, nor smelleth,  
nor tasteth, nor exerciseth any work,  
yea he neither heareth also the vanity  
of this world: again he regardeth not  
curious and beautiful things enticing  
vnto the loue of some vile thing vp-  
pon earth.

And he which is dead to the world,  
is not in the world, but in G O D to  
whome he liueth; euen as Paule to y  
a Coloss. 3, 3 beloued disciples doth say *⁴*, *Yee are  
dead, and your life is hid with Christ in  
God.*

This man doth so speake, so think,  
so behold things without, as though  
they were not. For the things which  
e 1. Joh. 3. 17 are seene, are temporall, and vaine:  
but the things which are not seene,  
f 2. Cor. 4. 18. are eternall f.

Hither dooth hee cast his eie; hi-  
ther doth hee hasten; hither is his  
desire; for these things doth hee la-  
bor; to attaine these things is all his  
g Col. 3. 1. 2. studie.

These things hee wisheth, these things hee loueth, these things hee seeketh, these things hee saoureth, euen which are within, and secrete, to wit, great good things, loueraigne, and eternall things, of which hee cannot thinke too often, because they

Chap.

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*of the Imitation of Christ.*

they are exceeding pretious, & sweete and delectable, and more than vtterable<sup>h</sup>.

h 1. Cor. 2.9

This man is farre estranged from present things<sup>i</sup>, and breatheth altogether after things eternall<sup>k</sup>, having the dominion over the sensuall appetite,

i Gal. 6.14

k Coloss. 3.3

For the flesh seeketh outward, desireth pleasant, loueth present, loatheth absent, fieth all sharpe and bitter things, which notwithstanding are good for the soule<sup>l</sup>. Whence it cometh that it will not suffer the spirit to be at rest, but layeth before it sundry phantasies, which are scarce to be spoken, and in truth not to bee accounted off.

l Rom. 8.4

5. &c.

But hee which is endued with the grace of spirituall fortitude, may with more ease subdue the insolent motions of the flesh, singing in the worde of the diuine power<sup>m</sup>, *The Lorde is with me, therefore I will not feare what flesh can doe vnto me.*

m Psa. 118.6

Therefore albeit this sensualitie doth moue battell, and the voyce of the flesh doth secretly murmur<sup>n</sup>; yet doth not the spirituall man easilie consent; for greater is the force of the diuine loue which inwardlie

n Rom. 8.23

*The fourth booke*

doth comfort.

This man now and then so sweetlie, so stronglie, and so earnestlie is drawne, raiſhed, and in loue with God, that ſcarcely hee doth ſee, and perceiue the things about him, and be heard in the world: becauſe he is  
**o Mat. 6. 21.** not there, but elſe where: not belowe, but aloft euen with God, and in God, which mooueth the ſpirit within him, and erecteth, and as it were carrieth it away in a fierie chariot, that at the length it may enioye him in an happie, and holie, and long wiſhed deſire of his heart.

This man is ſeldome found (idle) abroad, becauſe his friende hath borne him away. There quietlie and alone he heareth his ſpeech, euen the ſpeech of his beloued, & greatly doth reioyce to heare the voice of his vnſuſpected ſpouſe.

Neither ſtraight way doth he caſt his phiall vpon the ground to drawe vp vanitie: but hideth the founde treaſure, and ſhuttereth it vnder lock & key, that the foote of pride come not in, and ſo all virtue doe periſh. For  
**p Sal. 3. 8. 6** thus he ſaith to himſelf, *Set me as a ſeal on thine heart*, and ſo forth as it followeth in that place.

It

*of the Imitation of Christ.*

It is good to seale the heart, and to keepe it, least the beloued go back, and flie away: because he seeketh & visiteth aboue all, a pure and an humble heart.

q Mat 5. 8

Mat. 11. 29

These things hee thinketh with himselfe, and is astonished at that good thing which passeth all sense, and gifts. Yea still hee wandereth, and enquireth diligently, what thing is this? and exceedingly reioyceth, for that manna is come downe from heauen.

And hee wich ministrerth true bread from heauen, doth giue also a good vnderstanding to the taster, that hee may knowe, how euerie good giuing and euerie gift is from aboue, and cometh downe from the father of lights.

r Iohn. 6. 31  
32.

This worde now, saith hee, is from God. Without him there is nothing. I haue all things from him.

1 Iohn. 1. 3

Furthermore (this spirituall man) hee wondereth, and lamenteth that hee so lightlie esteemeth so excellent a good thing, by the which he is not a little blessed; and whie also he dooth not oftener bend his heart to heare and to see that, than the which nothing is more sweete, and

D

bles.

*The fourth booke*

blest to be desired.

And would to God hence-forth I might thus doe. For this exceedingly doth delight me, and more will delight me, the more I giue my selfe vnto these meditations.

Oh that my beloued would come into mine heart, that I might taste the sweetnes of his apples.

Oh that hee would decline vnto mee and shewe himselfe to mee, and mee to himselfe! Hee is my felicitie, and mine only delight.

Now begin I to couet, and desire, and greatly to loue this good thing, in whome all good things are <sup>u</sup>; this ioye, in whome is all ioye; this one thing, in whom are all thinges, small and great, base and hie; yet nothing created, but without all conceipt of man, the beginning and the end of all the good things which hee hath for-  
<sup>u Aq. 17. 28</sup>  
<sup>x Reuel. 1. 8. med x.</sup>

17 Hence it is that nowe and then I would thoroughly bee replenished with this good thing, and filled with that so heauenly ioye, and I couet after a sort euen to bee swallowed vp and consumed vtterly of him, that mine insatiable desire might once be satisfied in such sort, that nothing in  
 me



*of the Imitation of Christ.*

mee might bee mine, but his onelie whose the fire and heate of loue is, whose this woonderfull worke is also, that so I might the more greedily be carried to him-ward, and be made one spirit together with him.

Notwithstanding, all this doth not puffe vp the godly man, or make him to thinke himselfe some-what, or to despise others, or to iudge inferiours: for hee knoweth that whatsoeuer hee hath, commeth not of himselfe, but it is the free gift of God y 1. Cor. 4. 7, that thereby he is not to waxe proud, when he perceiueth himselfe to be so comforted of the Lord.

For hee seeketh not the praise of man, he careth not for foraine fauor, but hee seeketh the beloued, his praise and his fauour he onelie desireth, in whome hee hath all thinges, and shall finde more than all these things: because hee preferreth his loue, his sweetenes, and the ioiesfull enioying of him before all transitorie thinges; and his honour hee seeketh and sigheth for aboue all things else. And therefore he cannot bee proude, nor boast of any thing.

(God) hee is his glory, his praise, and his comfort <sup>2</sup>. (God euen) hee y 2. cor. 13. 3

*The fourth booke*

is his true and perfect ioy, his soueraigne & sole happinesse all his desire and perfection. And which more is, he would haue others also thus to reioyce with him, and to enioy such felicity without end both in this world, and in heauen too.

For this is his desire and praier, that God would reueale himselfe to all men, and that he would vouchsafe to conuert and draw all vnto him, that he alone might be praised & glorified. *1. Ioh. 4. 8* for he is both loue it selfe, and such a fountain of loue, as neuer can be drawn dry. For hee doth more loue all men, than all men (set together) can loue him.

Notwithstanding, it liketh him well, if any man haue a desire to loue him from the bottom, although hee cannot sound vnto the depth. For he in louing deuoureth, vanquisheth, & surpasseth all.

Chap.

*of the Imitation of Christ.**Chap. 9.*

A desire of the soule, that no  
*earthly creature may carrie*  
 her away vnto va-  
 nitie.



*Beho'd, I would take my  
 sight far off, and lodge  
 in the mountaines \**

*a Psa. 55. 7*

Oh how profitable,  
 how sweete, and how  
 ioyfull a thing it is to  
 sit solitary in silence, to talke with God,  
 and to enioy the onely good thing, in  
 which are all good things *b*!

*b Iam. 1. 17*

Would to God I were so conioy-  
 ned to that all simple and onely good  
 thing, that I might be mooued with  
 none affections and distractions of  
 transitorie things, nor curiously fas-  
 ten mine eyes vpon any creature, and  
 visible thing!

O wretched man that I am, who  
 shall deliuer mee from the bodie of  
 this death *c*?

*c Rom. 7. 24*

Alas, how often dieth my soule for  
 the creatures which shee loueth! oh  
 manie times she forgetteth her crea-  
 tor, and is carried awaie for their  
 takes.

Mine

*The fourth booke*

Mine vnstable minde now willeth  
this thing, now that thing, now it is  
heere, now there, seeking but not  
finding rest in creatures: because  
there is no creature which can yeeld  
full satietie to be enioyed<sup>d</sup>, though  
it hath some delectation for vse.

The heart of man is vnsearchable,  
and who can knowe it? O Lord,  
thou knowest the thoughts of men,  
that they are vaine<sup>f</sup>.

O eternall God<sup>g</sup>, most hie and  
infinite<sup>h</sup>, the creator<sup>i</sup> and gouer-  
nour of all things<sup>k</sup>, I am thy crea-  
ture<sup>l</sup> which thou hast made by thy  
power.

Thou hast made me that I should  
loue thee, and gladly would I loue  
thee, but I cannot as I would.

For I am fettered with vaine loue,  
and with clammye affections of tran-  
sitorie things; from which, while I  
would rid my selfe, hardly or not at  
all can I so doo without great paine.

Oh howe soone would they flie  
and perish, if thou Christ, wert sweet,  
and didst saour in my nostrils.

Notwithstanding sometime through  
the sight of the minde I doo behold  
thine inuisible thinges by the crea-  
tion of the world<sup>m</sup>, and thee also the  
soue-

*of the Imitation of Christ.*

soueraigne felicitie, the true and eternall God.

And gladly would I continue in these meditations, but forthwith I knowe not with what winde I am blowen away from them, and helde downe<sup>n</sup> like a miser by the loue and <sup>n</sup> Wis. 9.15 waight of visible things.

Behold, I firmly doo purpose in mine hart, as it were making a covenant betweene mee and thee, that for thy noble and pretious loue, I will neither loue nor looke vpon any creature, but will contemne all thinges, yea my selfe and all mine<sup>n</sup> : o Rom. 8.35 but straight waie worldlie, fleshlie, and familiar cogitations doo ascend into mine heart, as though in them were a certaine felicitie, and as though, if I contemned them, I were to forgo some great good thing: and these beare a good countenance, but they hide the wofull ende, showing what is present, but hiding the inconuenience that will ensue, as though euery where and in all creatures thou art to be sought, and that nothing were to be neglected or despised, which hath bin made of my God: and thus they withdrawe mee oftentimes from my purpose, and at the

*The fourth booke*

the length vtterly seduce me.

Oh howe vaine, and deceitfull,  
and almost nothing, are things  
which now stand and flourish, proued  
p<sup>L</sup>Loh. 2. 15 to bee <sup>r</sup>, which flying awaie after  
16 their sudden ioyes, doe leaue mee a-  
17 mong the thornes and briars of a  
gultie conscience.

But woe is mee, Lorde, yet woe  
again to me because so soone I haue  
beleued and assented to vanitie, and  
so quicklie forsaken thee, which art  
q<sup>I</sup>Iohn. 14. 6 the truth <sup>r</sup>.

Oh, howe greatly haue I sinned  
euen in this, that I haue not sticken  
to thee alone, neglecting all things  
r<sup>L</sup>Luk. 18. 29 else <sup>r</sup>!

30 For I was made to loue and to en-  
ioy thee: but by following after crea-  
tures inordinately, I haue lost thee,  
and found no rest for mine hart in  
f<sup>E</sup>Eccles. 1. 8 them neither <sup>r</sup>.

But turne me vnto thee, O Lord,  
and leaue mee not in earthlie things,  
thou which hast vouchsafed to pro-  
mise celestiall things to such as fol-  
l<sup>r</sup>owe thee <sup>r</sup>.

r<sup>M</sup>at. 19. 8  
Luke 9. 23

*of the Imitation of Christ,*

## CHAP. 10.

1. A comparison betweene earth'y,  
and heavenly ioies; 2. with a prayer  
for grace to contemne this  
transitory world.



**M**y soule hath refused  
comfort <sup>a</sup>.

ap. sal. 77.

Wander thou not  
after deceitful va-  
nities & madnes, O  
my soule, but turne  
vnto the Lorde thy

God, for hee is the fountaine of all  
comfort <sup>b</sup>.

b 1. cor. 1. 3

Whatsoever thou seekest either  
among men, or among creatures,  
thou shalt leese it, and shalt well  
perceiue it to perish. For though I  
graunt, they maie yeelde some shewe  
of comfort, yet sure I am nothing  
dooth continue <sup>c</sup>.

c 1. Ioh. 2. 15

Why so vainely wilt thou bee de-  
ceiued? It is egregious follie to beg  
of a begger, when he that is rich will  
giue abundantly. Euery creature is  
but poore to minister comfort vnto  
vs; but God which is rich in mercie <sup>d</sup>  
giueth to all men liberallie <sup>e</sup>, and  
reprocheth no man, if thou for thy  
part diligently doo seeke <sup>f</sup>, and pa-

16. 17  
1. cor. 7. 31

d Ephes. 1. 4

e Lam. 1. 5

f Matthe. 7. 7

tiently

*The fourth booke*

tientlie expect his leisure.

g Gen. 3. 9 Returne, o my soule, returne  
downe vnto Noah in the arke<sup>s</sup>, enen  
vnto Christ in thine heart, because it  
is not good to abide long abroad.

See thou refuse outward comfort,  
h 1. Ioh. 2. 25 if inwardly thou wilt bee refreshed<sup>b</sup>.

i Gen. 8. 7 Do not thou with the Crowe abide  
without the arke<sup>i</sup>, but with speede  
auoide the carcase. Returne thou an  
hungred, and Christ so will feede  
thee with the bread of life<sup>k</sup>.

k Iohn. 6. 31  
32-35

If vrgent necessitie, or weaknesse  
hold thee abroad, take heede thou  
make no staie, but with speede get  
thee home, least thou bee either o-  
uerwhelmed with the flood of words,  
or comprehended in the snares of  
diuelish temptation.

Manie traps are laid for the wan-  
dering soule; and great safetie hath  
the quicke returning dooue: which  
not finding where to set her foote,  
made haste to come back vnto Noah  
in the ship<sup>l</sup>.

Gen. 8. 9

Gothou therefore vnto thy secret  
place and abide there, yea let it bee  
a grieve for thee to be else where.

Oh blessed is the soule, which  
hath a cleere conscience before God  
m Mat. 5. 8 =, and is not delighted with anie  
vaine.



*of the Imitation of Christ.*

vaine thing<sup>n</sup>, which is neither polluted with louing any thing<sup>o</sup>, nor wearied with extreame hating any man<sup>r</sup>!

n Luk. 18  
29 30.  
o 1. Ioh. 2.  
15. 16

Blessed is the soule that seeketh no comfort of creatures, but fixeth all her hope in the Lord!

p Mat. 5  
22. 23. &c.  
q Pl. 40. 4.

Blessed is the soule which refuseth all outward and temporall quietnesse, and whatsoever belongeth vnto the welfare of the body; and which for the loue of CHRIST doth willingly embrace both payne and pouertie

Blessed is the soule which commendeth herselfe to God, that hee may doo vvith her euen as hee thinketh good!

r Mat. 19.  
29

Blessed is the soule which at no time seeketh her own glory<sup>t</sup>, which desireth at no time to haue her owne wil done; but continually mindeth, loueth, and preferreth the glory & will of God aboue all things.

Jer. 9. 24.  
1. Cor. 1. 31

Blessed is the soule which dooth estrange her selfe from whatsoever is temporall<sup>u</sup>, and keepeth her selfe pure and vndefiled before God in all her dealings<sup>v</sup>.

t 1. Ioh. 2.  
15. 16.

O reioyce and be thou much glad, thou which art such a soule: for thou maist

u Pl. 15. 1.  
2

*The fourth booke*

maist abide in secret and celestiaall cogitations, and so magnifie the Lord, day and night.

Blessed and blessed againe is the soule whose desires are to heauē-ward  
 x Colos. 3. 1. <sup>2</sup>, whose hands and armes are out-  
<sup>2</sup> stretched euen as the two wings of  
 y Eze. 11. 22 the Cherubins; whose eyes are pure  
 x Mar. 5. 8 to behold God <sup>2</sup>, whose inward power and strength doth go altogether, and ascend, and returneth not, vntill it haue him whome onely she loueth before all things! And when she hath found him, she followeth him whither soeuer he will haue her!

Gen. 35. 1

And when he speaketh, hee reioiceth to heare her make answer, saying; I am thine onely beloued, of thee elected. I am thine exceeding great rewarde <sup>2</sup>. Be thou neither proud in prosperitie, nor impatient in aduersitie. Consider howe they which loue me, are comforted of me. How sweetly, thinkest thou, I will entreate them, when they shall be receiued vnto the eternall rest, after that the troubles of the bodie and soule are laid aside!

Oh that I enjoyed such pleasure,  
 as dooth the holie soule, when the  
 senses

*of the Imitation of Christ.*

senses beeing asleepe, she is carrie la-  
lost, and eleuated aboue her selfe, be-  
loued, and coupled to GOD by the  
bonde of most heartie friendship ! O  
my God, which art the treasure of  
mine heart <sup>b</sup>, thou knowest right wel <sup>b Mat. 6. 21</sup>  
how this woulde bee the onely com-  
fort of mine inward grieve. But thou  
art the giuer, and the pouter in of this  
oyntment.

Thou teachest <sup>c</sup>, thou exhortest, <sup>c2. Tim. 3. 16</sup>  
thou cherishest, thou comfortest,  
thou carriest, thou vpholdest, thou  
guidest out and bringest backe, thou  
doost with the soule whome thou  
hast chosen, euen as thou wilt, and  
whatsoever thou doost and wilt, it is  
all good.

But I who am as a sowre vessell, al-  
together vnworthie to receiue the  
infusion of thy good spirit, doe hum-  
blie craue that plentifulle it may so  
spout forth vpon me, that I may both  
taste the sweetnesse of thine inward  
loue, and also receiue those sacred  
pleasures, the which, I doubt not, the  
religious soule doth feelee by thy  
grace.

I did smell the celestiaall perfumes  
a far off, when I did meditate certain  
inward cogitations of the minde  
concer-

*The fourth booke*

concerning the soule: but Lord, thou knowest how sildome, how little I do thinke of eternall things, howe often wordes doe wither, howe rude the vnderstanding, how vnquiet the conscience, howe my hart is troubled, darkened and irreligious, and onelic through mine owne default.

Notwithstanding sometime seeking a way vnto spiritual matters, hauing taken my cogitations with mee in secer, I begin seriouſlie to call in- to my remembrance the good things of the blessed soule, how greate are y celestiaall ioyes, and spirituall delights which are in her heart; what peace, what tranquillitie, what hope, and reioycing in God her Sauour, whose wordes be sweete, and face beautifull. And these cogitations, though short, they endure, yet whē they come blessed is the houre.

And I thus thinking and thou enlightning my darknes, I do finde iust complaints vppon my selfe, & by priuie holes of grace I perceiue how such and such is the soule inwardly v- nited vnto thee, & that so and so thou hast spoken to her.

She is still from all things sensible,

and

*of the Imitation of Christ.*

and thou in the spirit speakest to her  
of inuisible matters.

Shee seemeth as it were to be for-  
saken of all creatures, and after an vn-  
speakeable maner thou dost comfort  
her.

So that I said againe in mine hart,  
Wo to the sinfull soule<sup>e</sup>, to the grie- c Deu. 27. 16  
ued conscience<sup>d</sup>, to the man which Galat 3. 10  
is neither hot nor colde<sup>e</sup>, destitute of d Pro. 3. 33  
the light of grace, and of spirituall cō- Prou. 24. 19.  
fort, seeking teares, and yet finding e Reue. 3. 15.  
none. 16

But peace be to him which vnscie-  
nedlie doth loue Christ, & neuer tur-  
neth aside the eies of his heart from  
his Sauour<sup>e</sup>: but continuallie see- f Coloss. 3. 2  
keth the things which are pleasing in  
his eies.

For he shall walke in peace and e-  
quitie, and no stranger shall partici-  
pate of his pleasure. He shall well per-  
ceiue that his rest is good, and taste  
how sweete his Lord God is, in whom  
he trusteth<sup>e</sup>. Hee shall set him farre g Psal. 34. 8  
from outward tumults, and with  
hartie desire expect his prosperous  
comming. Lo, thus worketh the Lord  
in his elected vessels!

Hee which commeth vnto him  
shall not returne emptie awaie: for  
chere-

*The fourth booke*

cheerefully he bestoweth vpon the  
thirstie, drinke, and bread vpon the  
hungry<sup>a</sup>.

h Mat. 25.

35.

O my God, when thou entrest in-  
to the house of the soule which lo-  
ueth thee, wilt thou not feede her  
with thy milke? yea and bring her  
sometime beside her selfe, through  
thine abundant sweetnesse, to the ta-  
king of thee without any corporall si-  
militude!

O truth, truth, of what force &  
power is loue!

Then wilt thou speake thy word to  
her all secretlie, and shewe the things  
that shall be, and haue beene in most  
happie charitie, and fruition, where  
the wordes of man shall no more be  
heard.

From thenceforth thou wilt cause  
her to whit to doubt anie more of e-  
ternall rest, and of the fellowship of  
saints: but now by deferring the to-  
ken of speciall grace, thou makest her  
the more able to hope for the things  
she seeth not<sup>i</sup>, and to despise present  
things which by sense she cōprehend-  
eth.

i Ro. 8. 24.

O mercifull God, bee mindefull of  
me a poore begger, euen of thy great  
mercies<sup>k</sup>; and sende the true bread  
from

h. C. I.

*of the Imitation of Christ.*

from heauen<sup>1</sup>, thy good word so full *Ioh. 6. 31*  
of comfort and grace. *32. &c.*

## CHAP. XI.

1. That all comfort, and pleasures  
are in God. 2. A prayer that all people  
may glorifie the Lord. 3. The blessed  
state of good men 4. That wee  
are to be ready against  
the coming of our  
sauior Christ.



*Al* my bones shall  
saie, Lord, who is like  
vnto thee??

There is one<sup>b</sup>, &  
like to him there is

none<sup>c</sup>, euen my G O D it is<sup>d</sup>, to  
whome, whatseuer is compared, is  
nothing<sup>e</sup>. *a psa. 33. 10*  
*b Deut. 6. 4*  
*c r. Kin. 8.*

My God is entirely to bee loued, *d Ioh. 20.*  
and a most faithfull friend, which ne- *17*  
uer forsaketh the soule that loueth *e Pro. 3. 15*  
him<sup>f</sup>, but continuallie abideth with *Isai. 46. 9.*

her for company. And if sometime *f Ioh. 13. 1*

he hid himselfe, and suffer her to be

troubled, it is not done of him to de- *g Iam 1. 12*  
stroy, but to trie her<sup>h</sup>, to purge her *h Wis. 3. 6*

<sup>i</sup>, and to instruct her<sup>i</sup>. So that euen *i p. 1. 19. 71*

then he forsaketh not, but the more

may

*The fourth booke*

may see what he is of himselfe, and how farre he is come forward (in religion.)

O my beloued, thou art all faire & louelic, but not to the flesh, but to the minde; nor to the eie or sense but to the faithfull soule, to him which hath  
**k Mat. 5. 8.** a pure heart <sup>k</sup>, to him which is altogether addicted vnto things inuifible &  
**12. Cor. 4** spirituall <sup>l</sup>.

**18.** So that whoso desireth to be vni-  
 ted to thee by a religious affection,  
 he must of necessitie mortifie in him-  
 selfe all fleshly motions, and aboue all  
 retaine a pure conscience. For thou  
 art much displeased then, when a man  
 doth goe vnto fraile creatures to seek  
 consolation.

And therefore thou callest me in-  
 wardlie to loue thee <sup>m</sup>, and thou  
**Luk. 10,**  
**27** commandest that I waite for thee: for  
 then I shall finde thee, when I doe  
 humble my selfe, and wish that which  
 thou wilt.

And this shall bee all my felicitie,  
 euen freely to serue thee, neither  
 dreading anie losse, nor seeking anie  
**Mat. 10. 7** gaine: because thou allowest that  
 soule which purely doth loue <sup>n</sup>.

Oh blessed is hee, which both in  
 life and death sticketh onely to thee!

But



*of the Imitation of Christ.*

But as for me I am far-awaie cast oftentimes from thy fauor by louing, and that both inordinatelie, and vn= discretely, transitory things. But that I maie not perish with them, I with all speede will returne, and be= ho'd in them thy glorie °, and direct all my cogitations to thee=ward.

O my Lord, & God, which of no= thing hast made all things P, giue me grace for all things to praise thy name.

For all power, wisedome, goods= nes and mercie is thine °; thine also is euerlasting glorie and maiestie °.

Thy kingdome is an euerlasting kingdom: °; and thy dominion en= dueth throughout all ages.

Thou orderest all things °, both things aboue, and things in earth.

Thou knowest all thinges °, and possessest all things °; nothing dooth resist °, or trouble thee: but quietly thou rulest the world, and makest the rebellious to stoupe, and to serue °.

Thou art priue of all things which are doone in the world °; and before they were doone thou knewest their endes °.

Thou art the God both of heaven and earth °, the creatour of thinges

°Ro.1.21

°Gen.1.1

2, &amp;c.

Iohn 1.1 2

Act.17.24

°Reue.4.8

°Iam.1.17

°Ma.19.17

°Reu.7.12

°ps.145.13

°Wis.8,1

°Ecciu.23

verse. 19

°psal.95.4

Eccles.9.1

°dan.4.32

°Wisd.12

3.4 &amp;c.

Dan.9.3

12

°Ecclu.23

19

°Isa.46.10

°Ezra.5.11

*The fourth booke*

<sup>1</sup>Psa 89. 11 v'sible and inuisible<sup>f</sup>, the gouernor  
pl. 1 13. 14 of the whole world<sup>s</sup>, and the dispo.  
<sup>2</sup>psa. 47. 1 ser of the seasons<sup>b</sup>.

3 O blesse thy seruants, I beseech  
6.&c. thee, dispersed far and wide ouer the  
<sup>4</sup>Ecclu. 43 world, yet seruing thee most religi-  
5.6.&c. oustie. Make them ( constantly ) to  
found forth thy praite, and in all pla-  
ces with one voice to glorifie thy  
name.

Stir vp their hearts firmly to loue  
thee; and graunte that all their enter-  
pises may take a good end.

Oh, how gracious, and how good  
it. Cor. 2 9 art thou to such as loue thee ! howe  
kpl 34. 8. sweete art thou to them which taste  
thee !

They which haue felt thy sweet-  
nes, knowe thereby the better how  
both to thinke and speake For thy  
sweetnes surpasseth all sweetnes; and  
thy pleasures dooe sweeten all bitter-  
nes.

O Lord my God, holie men haue  
spoken, and Prophets haue talked  
of thee.

All the godlie from the world's  
beginning haue beleueed in thee,  
haue serued thee, haue glorified  
thee both with sacrifices and obla-  
tions, they haue praised and blessed  
thine

*of the Imitation of Christ.*

thine holy name: because they haue both acknowledged thee to bee the Creator and Maker of the vniuersall world, and also trusted in thee about all things<sup>1</sup>.

1 Heb. 11. 2  
3. &c.

They haue knowen thee in their visions, for thou hast reuealed thy name to them; and beside thee they knewe no God. They obserued the lawe of thy commandements, which thou gauest them.

They followed not the foolish imaginations of false Gods: but they worshipped thee which liuest for euer<sup>n</sup>, the creator of all things<sup>n</sup>.

m 1 Tim. 1. 17  
n Act. 17. 24  
Heb. 1. 3

They lifted vp their voice to thee with thankesgiuing: because from on high thou soundest in their eares, saying<sup>n</sup>, *I am that I am. Before mee there was no God formed<sup>n</sup>, neither shall there bee after mee.* I haue ordained the things which shall be, and I forget not whatsoever is past.

o Exod. 3. 14  
p Psal. 43. 10

This when they heard and vnderstood, they cast the cies of their faith as farre off, beleeuing that GOD will saue vs, and that he which shall come, will come, and will not tarie<sup>n</sup>.

q Heb. 10. 37

Knowing these things aforehand they were not a little comforted, and

*The fourth booke*

maruelouſſie aſtoniſhed, at the preſence of the glorie to come, they fainted. But afterwarde comming by little and little to themſelues, & with ioie beholding the power of God approaching, they ſaide, Hee is, euen he is the Lord our God, and wee haue none other. Hee hath taken vs, and hee will ſaue vs. Hee cannot denie himſelfe <sup>r</sup>, becauſe hee is faithfull.

12. Tim, 2, 13

1. Ioh, 1, 1, 3

As we haue heard, ſo we haue ſeene <sup>t</sup>: as wee haue beleeued, ſo wee haue ſpoken, and borne witneſſe to the truth <sup>t</sup>.

1. Ioh 3, 11

u pſa, 33, 9.

Once the Lord did ſpeake, and it was done <sup>u</sup>. Hee ſaide, My counſaile

xiſt. 46.

y pſ. 33, 10.

I ſhall ſtand <sup>u</sup>; but yours ſhall come to naught, O ye ſornes of men <sup>r</sup>.

Woe vnto them which imagine <sup>r</sup> Mich, 2, 1, euill <sup>r</sup>, and afterward make a ſcoffe at the word of God!

2. Mich, 2, 1

Woe vnto you which doe ſeine a religion out of your owne braine, and are exalted in your owne power!

Heare the word of the Lord, ye which ſerue the Lord: know ye that he hath a controuerſie with the inhabitants of the earth <sup>r</sup>.

4. Iſa, 4, 1

To turne awaie your ſelues, it is not good; ſtand yee therefore and conſider

*of the Imitation of Christ:*

consider his waies.

Returne you and come vnto him,  
so will hee ioyfullie receiue you into  
faueur; for the Lord is gracious and  
mercifull <sup>b</sup>.

<sup>b</sup> Exod. 34.6

He keepeth not his anger as man <sup>c</sup> Ionas. 4.2  
dooth <sup>e</sup>, but pardoneth all sinnes, yea <sup>f</sup> Hos. 11.9  
and moreouer he restoreth the former  
grace with the later.

Onely returne you with all your  
harts: and dedicate your selues whol-  
lie and vnfeinedlie to his seruice.  
Thus doe the Saints speake in mine  
cares.

That which musick is at a banquet,  
and sweete smelling frankincense in  
a censar: euen that is the word of god  
in a pure hart.

And thy Saints, Lord, filled with  
thy spirit, haue thus sounded forth the  
memorie of thine abundant sweetnes;  
and haue left their wordes vnto vs to  
be sounded abroad.

But my speech often time is stop-  
ped, so that it hath no passage to as-  
cend. But if that fire come from a-  
boue, then shall my tongue be hot: &  
if it once be enflamed, I shall forth-  
with be consumed.

I shall not be able to stand in the  
presence thereof; for as the winde

*The fourth booke*

driueth away chaffe, so shall sorrowe  
be expelled from the hart. And as the  
rust by the fire : so shall my sinnes be  
consumed.

The fire of God which consumeth  
all things, shall sweepe the floore of  
mans heart. Descende, and get vp;  
touch me a little, and I shall flee.

Things passed shall be as though  
they had neuer beene, and that to  
come shall not be accounted of; for  
all sinnes shall viterly be forgotten.

Old things shall passe away, newe  
shall come abundantlie; holie de-  
sires shall encrease, and rise vp on all  
sides, wheresoeuer the good spirit  
shall blowe.

Feare shall depart, loue shall pos-  
sesse the hearts of all; all affliction  
shall cease: for this alteration is by  
the hand of God.

Therefore that which I say is not to  
mine owne, but to his praise.

The pensue hath comfort; the hun-  
gry bread; the thirstie, drinke;

The sick is healed; the wauering  
assisted; the weake, stren; thened; the  
wearie, quieted; the hopelesse, com-  
forted; the complainer, pittied;

To the blinde, sight; to the wan-  
dering, a readie waie; to the knocker,  
the

*of the Imitation of Christ.*

the gate is opened.

He which doubted, is now resolved; hee which staggered, is now strengthened; he that diligentlie enquired, is now entertained ioyfullie by mother charitie. The friend cometh more ioyfullie to meete, than is the soule desirous to speake with him.

Lo now am I present, saith hee, say L. on, what newe thing hath fallen out? What, haue you forgotten what you are to suffer and to doe for my sake?

Yet this stayed me not, beeing desirous to goe forward with him. B. So straight-waie I mounted aloft, and forgot all mine affliction.

He would not by and by discomfort the partie so longing to abide with him: but with gentle words he said, that in due time it should be performed.

Thy desire is good, and request vn- L. to me doth like mee well: notwithstanding, it may not presently be graunted.

Go thy way, and get home to thine owne house, and declare to thine acquaintance what the Lord hath done for thee.

Saie vnto them, Prepare your  
E 4 harts

*The fourth booke*

harts euerie one of you; and laie  
downe the heauie burden of sinne;  
and be yee warie, and strong to re-  
sist the snares of Satan.

d iam, 4. 7

c Mat, 26. 41

Mark, 14. 38

Watch and pray, least yee fall into  
temptation.

I will come shortly, looke that I  
finde you readie.

Lo, I haue warned you aforehand.

## CHAP. 12.

1. The desire of the soule after God.

2. The properties of God by the sundry  
titles ascribed vnto him. 3. None  
commeth vnto God, vnlesse  
God draweth him.

apla, 33, 3



As vnto my soule, I am  
thy saluation.

Oh, of what excel-  
lencie art thou, my  
soule, what wonderfull  
virtue is hidden in thee, that thou  
canst neuer be at rest, vntill thou haue  
attained perfect happines, and found  
the last end which thou so desirest!  
which once being knowen and found  
out, the care is gone.

Oh happinesse aboue all happi-  
nes; O end without end, when shall I  
both



*of the Imitation of Christ.*

both without measure, & euertasting-ly enjoy thee!

I finde manie good things in this world. But they continue not<sup>b</sup>, neither doo they satisfie my desire.<sup>c</sup>

But one thing is necessarie<sup>d</sup>. This one thing is that I seek; this one thing I desire.

For one thing are all things<sup>e</sup>; and of one thing are all things<sup>f</sup>. If I get this thing, I shall be content: but if I enioie it not, I shall continually be tossed, because manie things cannot satisfie me.

What is this one thing? I am not able to saie what it is; sure I am I desire that, than which, nothing either is, or may be imagined either better or greater<sup>g</sup>.

For this is not one thing among many things; but one thing about all things<sup>h</sup>. And it is my GOD, to whome if I sticke, I shall doo well<sup>i</sup>.

To him, I say to him I crie, when I saie, Saie vnto my soule, I am thy saluation<sup>k</sup>.

O my soule, my longing soule, what more desirest thou? Is it not better for thee to cleaue vnto one thing, than vnto manie things? Of one thing are many things<sup>l</sup>, but

1. cor. 7. 31

1 Iohn. 1. 15

16

Ecclus. 1. 8

Lu. 10. 42

Isai. 43. 7

Gen. 1. 1. 2

&amp;c.

Iohn. 1. 1. 3

Esa. 46. 5

6. &amp;c.

Iob. 41. 1. 2

&amp;c.

Ezra. 5. 11

pl. 73. 28

psal. 35. 3

1 Act. 17

24

*The fourth booke*

one thing is not of manie things.

Ceasse to seeke manie things, ioine thee to one, stick vnto one : for in one thing all things consist.

Let others enquire after manifold and diuers outward things : but doo thou seeke one inward good thing, and it is sufficient.

m Mat 22, 5. Lo, this man seeketh a farme <sup>u</sup> ;  
Luke, 14, 18 that man trauelleth about his merchandise ; another heapeth vp much gold and silver ; another hunteth after pleasures and preferment ; another visiteth his friends and kindred ; another is merie with his acquaintance ; another rideth vnto cities and castles ; another dooth long to see diuers countries of the world ; another desireth wisdom, another preferment, another principalitie, another a kingdome : and thus one wisheth one thing, another man another thing, euen as aswell among the spirituall sort, as among the secular. But few dooe seeke one thing, and ( other things ) purelie and simplie for one thing. And therefore they neither dooe finde anie sure peace; nor yet fauor the inward grace of the spirit.

For so manie as are ( the seruants )

*of the Imitation of Christ.*

of Christ, dooe couet not temporall,  
not earthly things<sup>n</sup>, as though they<sup>n</sup> Colos. 3. 1.  
were then iolly and glorious fellowes,  
if they abounded therewith.

What then? wilt thou saie that  
the things which they seeke for, doo  
rouch thee. O deuout soule? in truth  
thou canst not

For my part, I detest all these  
things: for my good thing is but one  
thing; I loue but one thing, I require  
but one thing; and this one thing is  
better to mee than all other things  
either in heauen or earth.

If thou hast founde such a good  
thing, my counse'l is, that you hold  
and keepe it for whose sake you haue  
condemned all things. For hauing  
that, it shall not grieue you to want  
other things; naie, you will iudge it  
reason for the getting thereof, that  
you dooe both giue<sup>o</sup>, and suffer all  
things<sup>p</sup>.

o Phil. 1. 8.  
p Rom. 8. 35  
38

Now therefore, O my soule, seeke  
thou after so singular, and superex-  
cellent a good thing.

So long as you liue in the flesh, you  
are of necessitie to seeke: because  
that cannot too carefullie bee sought  
for, which can at no time sufficiently  
be comprehended<sup>q</sup>.

q 1. Cor. 3. 9

But

*The fourth booke*

But then shall you cease seeking,  
when the houre of enioying is once  
come. For then shall he be all in all<sup>r</sup>,  
euen hee which alone is all-sufficient  
for all, and euerie man.

And although there, too, he must  
be sought, where he is continually  
found: yet is he not there sought  
with labour, as in this world, but with  
surpassing pleasure, and loue<sup>e</sup>.

What he is in this life to the god-  
lie, it may be declared by his mini-  
fold titles: and such as haue experi-  
ence (of his goodnes) knowe very  
well how it may be shoven.

Notwithstanding, consider what  
the names of God are, as I haue lear-  
ned them in the schoole of experi-  
ence: I wil recite a few, but the grace  
(of his spirit) maie put you in minde  
of many mo beside.

Lo, he is a spouse<sup>r</sup>, to such as  
loue; but to such as still serue him in  
feare, a dreadfull Lord<sup>a</sup>.

Hee is a father to good children<sup>r</sup>;  
but to the obstinately wicked, a se-  
uerie iudge<sup>r</sup>.

To the sick, he is a physician<sup>r</sup>, and  
to the whole, wholesome foode<sup>a</sup>.

To the ignorant a teacher<sup>b</sup>, and  
to the obedient, an everlasting Sa-  
uiour

11.co.15.28

1.co.13.13

1Matth.9.15

2Deut.6.13

Mich.4.10

xMatth.6.9

y1.Tim.4.8

Heb.12.23.

2Mat.9.12

aIohn.6.55

56

bIohn.7.16

*of the Imitation of Christ.*

uour <sup>c</sup>.

<sup>c</sup> Mat. 1. 21

Hee is the waite <sup>d</sup> for beginners

<sup>d</sup> Ioh. 14. 6

the truth, for proceeders, the life <sup>e</sup>,

<sup>e</sup> Ioh. 11. 25

for the absolute performers of his holy will.

Hee is the hope <sup>f</sup> of repenters, and

<sup>f</sup> Col. 1. 27

a surpassing comforter <sup>g</sup> of the righteous.

<sup>g</sup> 1. Tim. 1. 1

<sup>g</sup> Ioh. 14. 26

He is a crowne <sup>h</sup> for the humble, and a punishment <sup>i</sup> for the proude.

<sup>h</sup> Luk. 2. 32

<sup>i</sup> 1. Cor. 7. 33

In darknes hee is a light <sup>k</sup>; and in the night, a lanterne <sup>l</sup>.

<sup>k</sup> Ioh. 1. 8, 9

<sup>l</sup> Iohn 3. 17

<sup>l</sup> Iohn 8. 12

He giueth medicine to the diseased soules, and much wine of comfort, to the sorrowfull.

<sup>l</sup> Iohn 1. 35

With such as stand to the battell, he standeth; with such as proceed in their iornie, he walketh; with such as feruently make haste, he runneth; with such as moant in diuine contemplation, he steeeth.

Doo you praie? he is present with you. Doo you reade? he is talking with you. Doo you meditate? he is still with you.

One and the same GOD worketh in all these things, shewing himselfe to euery one, euen as he thinketh good: in his wordes ther is no fault, and his works are past finding out.

For great and vnssearchable are his

his

*The fourth booke*

mRom. 11. 33 his iudgements<sup>m</sup>, and no man is to  
saie vnto him, why doost thou so?  
or why doost thou chuse this man ra-  
ther then that man<sup>1</sup>?

It is folly for a man to reason a-  
gainst the almightie: and all the will  
of Adams children is vaine, and to no  
purpose.

15  
11  
Rom. 9. 20  
21, &c.

How like you these things, and how  
doth God shew vnto you?

8. He seemeth sweete vnto me; nei-  
ther am I offended at his works

He is righteous<sup>o</sup>, and who can  
rebuke him of ill dealing?

o p salm 119.  
verse 137  
o ioh. 8, 46

He that so dooth, dooth set him-  
selfe against God, and shall be reproo-  
ued of his irreprehensible light.

M. But what thou hast heard; what is  
it in his presence? scarce vndoubted-  
ly so much as a sparke, without that  
which is hidden within.

Aske you what that is? I must say,  
I knowe it not, it is altogether aboue  
my capacity, euen as a certaine cloude  
far off, whose beginning and end are  
vnknownen.

And therefore meditate rather, &  
thinke more often vpon the base hu-  
manity of Iesus, and doo not mount  
vp too high, least of his glorious ma-  
iestie you be confounded.

But,

Chap. 12. 87 None canmeth except God draweth.

*of the Imitation of Christ.*

But forsomuch as burning loue dooth now and then forget all reuerence and feare, you are (in that respect) the more to be borne withall, if sometime, being extreameley set on fire with the loue Iesus, you dooe consider not onelic how hee cried in <sup>1</sup>Luk. 2. 5 the manger, and how hee hanged <sup>1</sup>Ma. 27. 31 vpon the crosse: but also how hee <sup>32. &c.</sup> raigueth now in heauen all glorious- <sup>1</sup>Phil. 2 9 sie, and rueth all things vnder hea- <sup>10</sup> uen molt wonderfullie. <sup>1</sup>Reu. 1. 5

O molt leuely Iesu, gladly doo I follow thee in earth: but more glad- <sup>S</sup> lie would I follow thee vnto heauen.

Where my treasure is, there would mine heart be also.

Oh, thou art my treasure, thou <sup>1</sup>Mat. 6. 21 which art at the right hand of the father, art deerer to mee than anie creature. For my sake thou wast in- <sup>1</sup>Ro. 8. 34 carnate, for my sake thou wast ele- <sup>1</sup>Heb. 1. 3 uate.

Thou diddest leaue thy selfe an example vpon earth; thou keepest <sup>1</sup>Ioh. 13 15 thy selfe for a reward in the heauens. <sup>1</sup>1. Pet. 2. 21

Vpon thee therefore mine eyes are fixed, and after thee dooe my feete trace. To thee mine heart saith, my face seeketh thee O Lord, I will continually seek thee thy face. <sup>1</sup>Psa. 27. 8

O

*The fourth booke*

O Lord, how long wilt thou hide  
the sight of thy glorie? Whie hidest  
a Job. 3. 24 thou thy face<sup>a</sup>, and takest mee for  
thineemie?

Thou knowest right well, my minde  
will be distracted hither and thither,  
and be diuerslie beate, vnill it be fast  
ioyned to thee her friends in the  
heauens.

For the force of loue knoweth not  
b Sal. s. 8. 6. how to be quiet<sup>b</sup>: but vncessantly  
maketh inquirie of her louer, sendeth  
forth messengers and doubleth  
prayers: neither doth it so giue ouer,  
because loue will altogether possesse  
that which it desireth.

Therefore drawe mee<sup>c</sup>, that I  
maie begin zealouslie to run after  
thee. I had neede to be drawen, and  
with great force to be drawen. For  
a Iohn. 6. 44 vnlesse thou drawe, none will come<sup>d</sup>,  
none will follow: because euerie one  
is naturallie inclined to himselfe-  
ward.

But if thou once drawe, lo then I  
doo hasten, then I run, then I waxe  
hot. But if thou doo not drawe, I doo  
neither run, nor seeke, yea scarce  
haue I anie desire at all to followe.  
If thou reach out thine hand, I doo  
run so much the more swiftly, as  
thou

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*of the Imitation of Christ.*

thou forceably doost drawe.

This is the voice of my louer drawinge, *And when I am life vp from the earth, I will drawe all men vnto mee.* e Ioh. 12. 32

O sweete Iesu, drawe mee after thee: and then not I onelie, but all shall run after thee by the sauour of thine ointments.

f Sal. 3. 1. 2. 3

First therefore drawe me after thee, then let others follow, seeing an example of good life.

But, that we may not waxe proud, it is good that we marke this withall, how that we began to run, not through our owne strength, but by the fauor of thine ointments.

This is the heauenlie drawing, without which no man can goe forward, no not so much as begin, as likewise thou diddest say: *No man* e Ioh. 6. 44  
*can come vnto mee, except my father drawe him.*

So that whome the father draweth, he followeth thee, and forsaketh himselfe.

He seemed to be well drawn that said: *Master, I will follow thee, whither soeuer thou goest.* But euerie one hath not the gift to be so affected: neither is it a weake stomach that can so readilie followe thee vnto all things.

What

*The fourth booke*

What lett hast thou, O my soule, that thou doost not forsake all for Iesus sake? Why so vnwillingly do you depart from vaine and transitorie things? What good can these worldly things do you?

Behold, while you passe by mortall things, and visibler creatures, willing to delight your selfe in them, you forget better things. While you so doe, you seuer your selfe from the soveraigne good thing, and turne your minde from the true, blessed, and eternall life.

And therefore you shall continue miserable and wretched, full of grieue and vexation <sup>i</sup>.

For turne your selfe on which side you will, and you shall finde matter of continuall sorrow, and much tediousnes, vntill you turne againe vnto thy creator: because he is thy peace <sup>l</sup>, & secure quietnes.

But, if thou neither make staie in earthly things, nor fasten thy foote in the mire, but rather beholde and worship in the glasse of worldlie creatures, not the figure which passeth awaye <sup>l</sup>, but him whose image and superscription it is, blessed art thou, and shalt neuer die <sup>m</sup>.

For

of  
Fo  
visibler  
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shalt  
bowe  
be



*of the Imitation of Christ.*

For when thou seekest after these  
visib'le thinges not to enioy them,  
but beholdest them to the ende to  
glo-rie the name of thy creatour, by  
making to thy selfe of his best and  
best workes a kind of ladder where-  
withall thou maiest ascend, thou  
shalt be deliuered so from the filthy  
bowels of this world, and thoroughlie  
be coupled to thy desired ende,  
which is aboue all things  
the blessed God for  
euer and euer.

*Chap.*

*The fourth booke*

CHAP. 13.

1. How, and when the soule and God  
are vnited together. 2. The miserie  
where God is not  
present.

apla. 63, 8



*Y Soule cleaueth vnto  
thee .*

O my God, the true  
comforter, thou knowest  
how thou likest  
me well, and how I  
take pleasure daily to be talking with  
thee secretly alone.

But where may I seeke thee, if hap-  
pely I do misse thee for an hour? who  
shall bring me vnto thee?

b Isai, 46, 9.

c Math, 6, 9.

Thou art God, aboue all things <sup>b</sup>;  
and I beneath all things a miserable  
man. Thou art in heauen <sup>c</sup>, & I in the  
world. Thou art most high, but I am  
poore, and a begger.

Who euer hath measured the di-  
stance betweene heauen and earth?  
Far asunder bee they; but farder art  
thou fro me, O God.

Who therefore shall vnite mee to  
thee? either thou must do it, or none  
can.

But

*of the Imitation of Christ.*

But if thou wilt, it may speedilie be done. And thou knowest, how of my selfe I may easilie fall: but that I do stand, and goe forward, it is of thy goodnes.

So that my soule dependeth vpon the grace of thy spirit, and of the infusion of thy speciall fauor.

If thou command, it shall be lifted vp from earth: but if thou turne away thy face, it shall be greatly troubled.

But of thy wonted fauor and mercie receiue mee; & let thy right hand guide me wonderfullie vnto thee.

Heare this, all yee people. <sup>ps. 49. 1.</sup> giue care all yee that dwell in the world; for it is an easie thing with God to bring it to passe, as it is written, that the rich and poore may be all one.

I am poore, and lack manie things: but this my God is rich, and wanteth nothing. <sup>ps. 50. 11</sup>

And although no great experience, yet I haue an vndoubted testimonie to prooue that the soule through grace maie be vnited to God.

*My beloued is mine, saith hee f, and I am his, he feedeth among the lilies.* <sup>f. Sal. 2. 16</sup>

This

*The fourth booke*

This is the testimonie of the friend, and his dearling; of the bridegroome, and the spouse: and it is a verie fit, and a strong testimonie of the holie lawe.

g Ioh, 17. 21 The next is like to this &: *I will that they all may be one, as thou, O father, art in mee, and I in thee.*

Behold the notable testimonies of two bookes, whereby it plainly appeareth, that the soule, through speciall grace from aboue, may bee linked familiarly vnto God.

And although it rarely come so to passe: yet is it dearely to be accomplished of, and not altogether vnknown to the louer. And againe, though verie hardlie: yet may it fall out.

The soule therefore so conioyned to God, let no man dare to separate, or to trouble.

If thou doost wonder at this maruelous vnion, wonder thou and maruell at the excellencie of his goodnes, and at the strange and singular uniting of the humane bodie (to his God-head.)

He may doe what hee will, which onely doth great wonders<sup>h</sup>.

hpl 136.4

If thou lookest for merits, you shall

*of the Imitation of Christ.*

shall finde, it is his good pleasure to haue it so.

O sweete societie with Christ, and vnder the wings of Christ!

O gracious coniunction, full of loue, and sweetnes of the holie ghost, the which is perceued better than vttered!

These things belong vnto the soule that is estranged from all worldly matters, and is not delighted with this present life: but is carried aloft in godly meditation.

The more the louer knoweth this, the more am I ignorant. Notwithstanding, gladly would I bee in presence when the deuout soule is in such an happie case.

And then is she so, when the spouse and she is together at the noone day. But then it fareth ill with her, and that verie ill too, if it happen that Iesus bee awaie; if the perfumes of grace run not from aboue, if no pleasure she take in the holie Bible; if it bee irksome for her to continue in prayer and godlie meditation; if the cloudes of the heart be so thicke, and hurtfull cogitations doe so preuaile, that they cannot bee restrained, but do laboꝛ to ouerwhelme in a manner  
all

*The fourth booke*

all the former good things.

O Lord God, why dost thou so? What plaie is this? O blessed Iesus, what meane you heereby?

If it were not offensive to thine honour, I could wish to haue farther communication betweene thee, and thy beloued.

For so much as shee is so greatlie desirous of thy gracious presence, whereby she may be nourished with chaste delights, I doe much muse whie sometime you suffer her to sit so desolate. Thou passest by, and goest thy waie, as though shee had no desire vnto thee. But she is alone all pensie. For thus she saith in effect, *With my soule haue I desired thee in the night.*

118. 26, 9

It is night with her, when thou, the true light, art not present. So that shee prayeth for thy presence, that the darkenes of sinne comprehend her not. For she feeleth manifold discomforts when thy gracious visitation, is taken from her. For, had shee not suffered somewhat, she had neuer so earnestlie cryed vnto thee.

Another also, which was before  
k Psal. 63, 8 saide, cryed thus, *My soule cleaueth*

v. 26



unto thee.

But I thinke no trouble is or seemeth so troublesome to her, as the want of thy presence.

And no maruell, if through this want the waierward soule doo languish awaie in sorrow. For thou art verie hardlie found at any time; and being found, she reioiceth at thy returne, hoping to spend the day merilie with thee: but thinking little of thy departure, she suspecteth no aduersitie to come. But handling another matter secretly, thou often takest thy flight.

For thou departest sudainlie out of her hands, when she cannot laie hold vpon thee.

I doo praise thee: but in this how shall I praise thee? if thou hast any praise and sweetenes, why doo you seeme to forgoe it in this deed?

If thou wert not, she might be offended. But shee can take none of fence at thee, who so mightily doost loue her.

If therefore anie good reason bee signified vnder that lesson, O God shew it me.

For gladly would I vnderstand the same: neither do I thinke it vnnes-

*The fourth booke*

farie to learne though it be but little.

Because no man of himselfe can behold thy secret iudgements: but it is thy light which dooth both enlighten darke, and driue away hurtfull things.

What therefore may the cause be that sometime so secretlie you withdrawe your selfe from the soule, shee not witting thereof?

Doo you loue her, or no? If you doo loue her, then why do you leaue her, my beloued? If you loue her not, why then haue you visited her before time? Againe, if you loue her not, why doo you make returne, why knocke you at the doore, why enter you in againe? What, is it of lightnes that you doe so both go and returne? God forbid.

But so often change dooth not a little greeue her; yea much it dooth disquiet her. Yet the griefe would be the lesser, if thou wouldest say plainlie<sup>1</sup>, *I doe goe, and will come vnto you, your heartes shall reioyce, and your ioy no man shall take from you<sup>m</sup>.*

1 Ioh. 14. 23

m Ioh. 16. 22

But now you cast out neuer a byword; onely shee thinketh vpon that speech, which she well perceiueth to be performed in her selfe, how Iesus hid

*of the Imitation of Christ.*

hid himselfe, and went out of the Temple <sup>a</sup>.

n Ioh. 8. 59

A fewe things I haue against you, but my complaint doth spring out of a good roote. I humbly request to be instructed, I loue not to contend.

And therefore when occasion serueth, make answer I beseech you.

Also let the godly soule say for her selfe somewhat for her learning.

Likewise make you answer boldly when your part requireth.

O my soule, answer thou thy beloued boldly. For thy friend will patientlie heare, and meete thee with milde wordes, that you may suffer none hinderance.

For if hee bee not thy comforter, who will comfort thee? And who more fauourably will beare thine infirmitie, than hee which beareth all things, & yet is not burdened? And to whom more safely can you reueale your miserie, than to him which perfectly knoweth all things? Or in whom may you put more confidence, than in the truth which deceineth not?<sup>a</sup>

o Eccclus. 27.  
verse. 19.  
p Iohn. 6. 14

Now, if any stranger, or one that is not a friend to the spouse, shall heare these things, let him be driven

*The fourth booke*

from the doores. But if hee loue the spouse, if he bee faithfull, it deuoute and spirituall, let him haue free ingresse.

q Matt. 5. 3

If hee bee a keeper of good conscience, a loue of vertue and discipline; if hee be pure in heart, and cleere in iudgement; if humble in himselfe, and good towards others; if he can neither wickedlie carpe at, vainly extoll, rashlie reprocute, impudently maintaine, nor prouddie commend things; but contrariwise, if he haue learned both the things which he conceiueth not, to reuerence, and also rightly to interpret obscure and mysticall matters, let him haue entrance, and heare the communication. For the affection of the hart through the sound of words ought to be noted, rather than the qualitie of voyces.

And therefore tell me o soule, how dost thou feelee thy selfe, wanting now the grace of thy beloued? I for my part do see that hardly I can take it well. if he keepe himselfe long away: and I conceiue the like of you.

If you thinke good, let vs sit heere together, and confer wee hereof to our comfort.

Chap.

## of the Imitation of Christ.

## CHAP. 14.

1. A lamentation of the soule for  
the want of grace.

*Mine heart breaketh for  
desire.*

a Psa. 119. 10

What is it thou saist?  
Why sayest thou, Zi-  
on, the Lord hath for-  
saken me?

Feare not daughter Syon, thou lo-  
uing and religious soule: lo thy king,  
and welbeloued friend commeth to  
thee.

Arise, stand vp, and behold the ioy  
which commeth toward thee from  
thy God.

S. I haue sought, saith the soule, &  
haue not found <sup>b</sup>, I haue called, and <sup>b</sup> Sal. S. 3. 2  
he hath not answered, and therefore  
I doe breake for thought.

M Then said I this is the voice of  
the Turtle hauing lost her mate.

It is not now with you as it was  
yesterday, and carewile, when you  
sang the songs of myrth.

S. The morning is past, night com-  
meth. and the pouse resteth him-  
selfe at noone tide: yet may I not

F 3

come

*The fourth booke*

come nigh him.

M. Your words are sorrowfull, and your eies shed teares. O soule, thou art griued, and hast neede of comfort. But speake, whence commeth your grieve?

S. I am not troubled either for gold or siluer, or any worldely matter, neither for lucre, nor for hurt, neither for iniurie, nor for pouertie, for I am now dead, and crucified to the world.

M. If I bee not deceiued, long since you renounced the world. But whether in all things perfectlie you haue denied the same, and are come euen vnto a verie hatred of your selfe, I would faine know.

S. Verie few haue that gift, and it is especially looked for at your hands.

M. Why therefore are you so pen-siue? What haue you forgone? If it be for your friend his sake, I must needs confesse you doe well to be sad: neither should you take delight in anie thing, vntill he returge, and visit you againe.

But in the meane while, how doe you susteine your selfe vpon the beloued, O sweete soule?

And sure I am hee is not alway present

*of the Imitation of Christ.*

present at a wish. Therefore while he is absent, what comfort haue you, wherein do you take delight?

Tell me your secrets, be they neuer so grieuous.

That you beare the absence of Christ heauilie, no man doubteth, but he only that loueth not.

Now you are sad, I take it, not for this worlde, but for the spouse Christ. And I knowe full well that when hee shall returne, you will bee merrie againe: because hee will not alwaies forget you. For he hath said <sup>e</sup>, *I will* eIoh. 14. 18.  
*not leave you comfortlesse, but I will come to you.*

Therefore your words are not vain, beeing vttered with such griefe, but they declare a louing hart, and strike the cold affection, which is not inflamed with the loue of Christ.

For your voice, is the voice of a Turtle, not the crying of a murmurer. And therefore I trust, you shall finde him, whose losse you so lament.

Notwithstanding I demand, What say you of him, whose absence you do so bewaile? Is he good, or no?

S. Doubtlesse hee is good, and singularie good too <sup>d</sup>, righteous, and d Mat. 19. 26

*The fourth booke*

faithfull, in him there is no wickednes, neither can be.

e Iob. 34. 10

f 1. Pet. 2. 22

M. Why therefore lament you for the good, in whom is no deceit?

S. I weep not for the good, in resp<sup>t</sup> that hee is good: but I lament mine owne miserable condition, because I haue lost a good and a faithfull friend.

I, euen I haue deserved this: but alas, alas that I kept not his fauor!

By the lack, I haue now learned what I haue lost. And the absence of a friend sheweth, what his presence did good.

I was merry and iocund with him: but I did no whit consider of his speedy departure.

He came skipping vpon the mountaines, hee was ioyfull and iocund in the porches of mine house. And straightway I vnlocked the doores of the flesh, and let in the beloued vnto me. I did sit, and rested within vnder his shadowe from the haile & raine. And it did mee much good to haue his company.

Whie should I not reioice? He is my ioye, and the comfort of mine heart.

Ab, what had I? And what then did



*of the Imitation of Christ.*

did I possesse?

I am not able to vtter, how wel I prospered then; neither is it conuenient that I should: I coulde not desire more then I had, he being present whom alone I loued.

Oh, how did I loue, when I desired both my selfe, and all things beside!

I had either little or no care at all of any thing that might delight me; for I was ranshed with loue of him, and whatsoever was not my beloued I loued as altogether vsauorie. But he being taken awaie, I am in a manner cleane out of heart.

For my soule depended vpon his grace, because I had none other comfort besides him, whose absence I do thus lament. He did content me, and was sufficient to the making of true mirth indeed.

As I would, so was he; and whatsoever he enioyned me, I tooke it in good part, and I consecrated my self wholie and frankelie to his will. So that there was a good agreement, & great quietnes between vs.

No man durst be so bold as to interrupt our silence, when hee had commanded so through my mouth.

*The fourth booke*

g. Sal. S. 2.7

L. I charge you, ô daughters of Ierusalem, by the Roes, and by the Hindes of the fielde, that yee stir not vp, nor waken my Loue, vntill she please.

S. Now therfore note, if you be able to conceiue my woordes, what great cause I haue to lament the absence of my friende, by whose presence I began to bee so rich with all good things.

M. Heereunto I answered, I know well what you say: by often experience I haue prooued so much as you speake.

But let vs comfort our selues in this, that the dispensation of his wil is the increase of our zeale, and deuotion.

And nowe I haue receiued with thankfulness that which you haue vttered: notwithstanding, I would more throughlie haue them beaten into mine head For they which be hard of conceiuing, are often to be told of a matter.

Chap.

*of the Imitation of Christ.**Chap. 15.*

1. Touching the fruit of friendship.
2. *The benefits of Christ upon man.*
3. *The true felicitie and ioy of the soule.*
4. *The affinity betweene Christ and the soule of man.*



*Raised bee G O D*

*which hath not put backe  
my prayer from me.*

*apla. 66. 29*

Therefore I am now  
again ezealously to en-  
quire, if your friend at  
any time left you without inward  
comfort.

What meane you? What muse you  
heere about? How also may he bee  
reconciled and reclaimed?

Of all friendship, I beseech you,  
ô deare and beloued soule to Christ,  
conceale none of these things which  
I am to de. naund of you.

You may so doo me a pleasure, in  
opening to me your godlie cogitati-  
ons.

By your talke, I shall bee able to  
measure the waight of my griefe,  
whether iustly or without cause I was  
pensive.

For

*The fourth booke*

For I haue seene you sometime merrie, and sometime sad, and by and by glad againe, and by you<sup>er</sup> I did somewhat consider of my selfe.

But I suppose the chieftest cause of this your alteration is, that returning and departure of the beloued. The which hath made mee, perceiuing how you haue run ouer many matters, for mine instruction to resort vnto you.

S. According to your desire, I will bend my selfe somewhat to vnfolde the things which I feele within me, both when I am with my friend, and also when I am alone, looking for him whom I so do loue.

This first vnderstand, I reape not so much ioy and pleasure by his presence, but I find as much sorrow and bitterness through his absence.

But why it pleaseth him so to come and go, rather I had he should declare than I.

But you shall heare it when I haue finished the wordes of my song, because in the ende wee will bring him in vnto vs, and sitting among vs, hee shal teach vs his order, the which hee vseth to show vnto such as desire his presence.

*of the Imitation of Christ.*

In the mean while giue attentiuē care vnto mee, and be not offended at mine homely speech.

For wee are now come together to stirre vp our hearts, and either to weepe together, or through loue to reioyce together.

For w<sup>o</sup> vnto him that is alone <sup>b Eccles. 4. verie. 10</sup> because when he falleth into some sorrow, or temptation, there is not a second to lift him vp. And if two be together, they will comfort one the other, while one being sad, the other ministrath ioy; or if he refuse to be comforted, he shall bee pitied forthwith, and griefe will be taken for his griefe: and so it will fall out that either they will both be glad, or both sad together. And although some sorrowe doo yet still continue for some aduersitie, or matter of sorrow: yet the more patiently they beare it, because their harts be so linked, that nothing can change or alter their minds.

Now, who seeing this faithfull concord of mindes, but must needs breake into these wordes, and say, <sup>c psal. 133. 1</sup> Behold how good, & how comly a thing it is, brethren to dwell euen together!

And therefore I can the more boldly

*The fourth booke*

boldly tell you what I think. because  
I dread no deceit, or subtiltie in  
you.

Lo, this all sweete spouse, and best  
beloued friend, our Lord Iesus Christ,  
the loue of holie soules <sup>a</sup>, euen of  
pure loue, not able otherwile to doo,  
allured mee vnto him; and when I  
was not, he gaue me life <sup>b</sup>. wisedome  
and power to beholde this common  
light.

d. Wis. 11, 23

c. Act. 17, 31

Hee gaue mee grace to bee borne  
anew by Baptisme, and adorned  
me with the roabe of his pretious  
merits.

Ouer and besides, when afterward  
I had foully bespotted my selfe with  
sinne, and was far vnfit to loue him,  
he cast not his eye vpon my filthines,  
but vpon the side of his mercies.

For when as yet I wandred out of  
the way, he reclaimed me of his good-  
nes <sup>c</sup>, not suffering mee to perish in  
this wicked world.

f. Rom. 8. 30

Moreouer, hee hath provided mee  
a place to rest in so long as I lue in  
this mortall bodie.

Notwithstanding, this dwelling  
vnder the shadowe of the beloued, is  
not the true rest, nor the rest which  
shall for euer continue: but that is  
the

*of the Imitation of Christ.*

the true rest, which wee shall feele  
after the labors of this present life. g Reue. 21. 4

Yet for the soule to perceiue her  
selfe to bee vnburdened of worldlie  
cares, and there to rest where shee  
may the more fullie serue her belo-  
ued, and attend vpon him in the se-  
cret chamber of silence, it is a kind  
of comfort.

Furthermore, my friend hath not  
left, but assisted mee in my diuers  
troubles, and sorest tentations.

Also, he hath both instructed mee  
oftentimes with profitable sermons,  
and confirmed me in his word.

And as young plants are wont to  
be watered with showers: so he hath  
watered mee with inwarde comfort,  
that the vertue newlie implanted  
within me may not wither.

L. And he said to me, If thou hast a  
lust vnto mee, and wilt hearken vnto  
me, thou shalt enioy good things;  
if thou wilt doo, whatsoeuer I com-  
mand thee, thou art a friend of mine<sup>b</sup>. h Ioh. 15. 14

If thou wilt choose me, and loue  
me aboue all things, all things that  
you aske, my father will giue you:  
but if you forgoe me, then shalt thou  
come to destruction, for my wrath  
shall bee incensed against thee; if  
thou

*The fourth booke*

thou seeke after another, he shal not please thee long, but thou wilt loath and abhor him. Because I am the saluation, and the life of the soule.

i Iohn. 14. 6

Iohn. 17. 25

S. So I turned mee vnto him which had doon me good, & expelling from out my selfe the dust of earthlie affections, I decreed in mine hart from thenceforth to serue him only: because I found nothing better than him, nor could imagine no couenant more profitable.

Let others let, and seeke what friendship they will elswhere, I am thoroughlie perswaded this is the true man of the soule, for whose sake mee thinkes I could gladlie forsake this world, to enioy his loue euerlastingly.

And therefore I stucke vnto him, for he liked me still; neither could I find a better friend.

For my soule alwaie hath exceedingly desired such a one, as is the greatest for power, the best for goodnes, the worthiest for dignitie, and the most happy for all good things.

And because he is verie courteous, hee gaue me comfortable wordes, warily foreseeing that they should neither terrifie, nor breake mee through

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*of the Imitation of Christ.*

through ouer-much roughnesse, but rather enioine a d teach mee that which should bee both light, and sweete to be borne, that so my yong affection might the better be drawn on, and the more forceably addicted to the friend beloued, and shrink not backe.

M. She shall the better, said he, bee instructed, and profit, if not by force, but through gentlenes she be prouoked forward. She will the more easily receiue my yoake, rather by loue with rewards, than by feare with punishment. And if she neede impulsifion, let it wisely be vsed, that violence do not overthrow her.

For he knew right well what was best for a young plant, and what profit this his kindnes would bring vnto mee, especiallie at the time of tryall, when I should easily call into my remembrance the good things which at the first he did vnto my soule, and thereby take courage to proceede in the battell.

Hee would not straight way open vnto me, what and how much trouble I was to endure in his seruice; but sometime hee tempered aduersitie with prosperity, well considering my  
weake

*The fourth booke*

weakenes at the first vntil through experience I had gotten strength to endure affliction

After all this he caried mee about, instructed, and boare mee vpon his shoulders.

Hee conducted mee ouer the holie Scripture, & with the heate of his holie Spirit he armed me against the wicked tentations of Sathan.

Moreouer, he placed before mine eyes exāples of all the virtues, namely, the holy Patriarches, and Prophets, besides the glorious lights of the new Testament.

Enen as a Mother teacheth her little childe, so he instructed me, breaking spirituall shales, and putting the kernels into my iawes, because they were swete to be eaten.

Search if you can what they signifie, and where such may be found.

Open the apostolicall booke, read aduisedlie, and see if you are able to comprehend so great mysteries.

Peruse the Prophet Isaiah; looke into the Gospell, the light of all lights, and marke if they doe not yeelde most pleasant notes of themselves.

In them whatsoeuer you finde  
which

*of the Imitation of Christ.*

which is obscure; and hard to bee vnderstood, that is a nut in a shell

But if you heare it expounded, and vnderstand that which afore you did not, then broken is the shell, and the sweetnes of the nut doth fauour in the heart. And so are wee to iudge of other darke sentences. Whereby you may beholde so many nuts, as you see hidden sentences.

And how thinke you, did hee beare me on his shoulders? That hee did so often as he behelde mine infirmitie, and yet neither cast mee off, nor despised me, but patiently and mercifully did beare with me<sup>n</sup>.

Againe, hee did beare mee on his shoulders, when hee made other men to beare with mine infirmities, and whatsoeuer was blame worthy within mee.

k 2. Pet. 3. 9.

Besides, yet more louingly hee did beare me on his shoulders, when hee bare his crosse vnto the place, called the place of dead mens sculs<sup>l</sup>, where hee was crucified. For then was I a more heauie burthen vnto him, than the crosse was: And my sinnes were more grievous to his bones<sup>m</sup>, than this wood of the crosse to his backe. Because for my sake that crosse was carried,

IIoh 19. 17.  
18.

m 1. pet. 2.  
24

*The fourth booke*

n Isa 53.5.6 carried <sup>n</sup>, not for his owne sake.

Oh, how is he aboue all things to be loued, and to be worshipped, by whose grace and merits I am thus both found out <sup>n</sup>, and redeemed <sup>p</sup>.  
o Luke. 15.4  
5. &c.  
p Gal. 3.13 And therefore he shall be as deere to me, as the childe is to his mother.

But well I know, that I am far vnmeet to loue him, Notwithstanding my boldnes come h from his goodness. Neither could I doe otherwise but run vnto his most friendly embracements, when he shewed himself so kinde vnto me.

I do well remember what the Prophet David in a certaine place doth say <sup>q</sup>.  
q 1. Sam. 18  
verse. 18

*What am I? and what is my life, or the familie of my father in Israel, that I should be sonne in law to the King?*

But our affinitie together is much more excellent, than this of David and Saul. Because ours is a pure and sincere kinred, not with flesh and blood, but betweene God himselfe, betweene faith vnuolated, and a good conscience.

Of this, did that Disciple whome <sup>11</sup>.  
11. Iohn. 4.4 Iesus loued, speake on this wise <sup>11</sup>:

*Greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.*

For

*of the Imitation of Christ.*

For God is loue<sup>e</sup>, and loue bringeth forth this kindred. (1. Ioh. 4. 16)

I herfore sith Dauid thought himselfe far vnmeet to be sonne in lawe vnto an earthly King: much more abashed ought I to be, to enter into alliance with the King of all Kings, that vouchsafeth to allure mee, vile wretch, into his friendship.

So that he hath delt with me, not according to my deserts, but euen as it seemed good in his mercifull eyes.

Oh blessed, and happie art thou, soule, nowe thou art fast bound with the chaine of the heauenly loue!

Oh how noble, and free art thou, seeing thou art priue euen to the sighings of so holie copulation!

But seeing I haue spent many words about the beloued, and yet haue not answered fully vnto your demaund,

let vs now begin afresh, and god grant that our speech may be both to our comfort and profit.

*The fourth booke*

## CHAP. 16.

1. The more wee loue Christ, the more wee may.
2. Tentation and when.
3. Happinesse of the life to come.
4. How to beare affliction.

a Ps. 123. 2.



*B*ehold, as the eyes of seruants looke vnto the hands of their masters: and as the eyes of a maiden vnto the hand of her mistress, so mine eyes are fixed continually vpon my friend.

Since first I began to loue him, I haue had a great desire to continue with him. And this mine intent liked him well, and hee allowed the same, saying <sup>b</sup>:

b Iohn. 15. 5

*He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit.*

But that the truth, the strength, and the puritie of my loue might appeare, it was behoouefull that I should bee tempted. And so I could not bee, vntill he both suffered the same, and hid himselfe.

And, because tentation serueth both for the purging of the inner  
c Pl. 119. 73. man, and for the fruitfull bringing forth

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forth of virtue; and also for the better perceiuing the spirituall graces of God, I was tried, and exercised therewithall.

How stronglie, and how often hee flang me this waie and that waie, my God and Lord, which knoweth all secrets <sup>d</sup>, and is a witnesse to euerie priuie cogitation of the heart <sup>e</sup>, and still seeth mee, and perceiueth how I am nothing else but a fraile creature <sup>f</sup>, euen he knoweth right well. d Eccles. 13.  
verse 19  
1 e Act. 15.8  
f Psal. 102. 11

If therefore he had not assisted me, when I was extreemly afflicted, doubtles I had perished <sup>g</sup>, being readie to fall into the pit of desperation. But hee, whose manner is to comfort the troubled in spirit <sup>h</sup>, tooke mercy vpon me. g Psal. 119. 93  
h Psal. 34. 18

For, if God helped & assisted not, who were able to beare so manifold tentations!

And therefore it was of his great mercie that I stode before the face of such troublesome tempests: and also it is of the same his goodnes, that still I do stand and fall not.

But heereof I may not vainelie boast, so long as I liue in this mortall bodie.

For though I see the element is  
NOW

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now cleere, yet doe I not thinke that long it will continue quiet. For the winde to day will arise, & that hap- pelie when we thinke least thereof.

So that by so much I perceiue I doe neede my friend his assistance, by how much I perceiue I do lie open on all sides to troubles,

We shall be quiet no where but in  
[Reue. 21.4.] heaven<sup>1</sup>, where my friend doth feed his elect with ioy and exultation,

But when there? Whan can I speak thereof? Scarfe can I thinke any thing thereof, and that not euidentlie enough; and enter thereinto I may not.

Oh that he would come, and set mee in that all glorious, quiet, and fruitfull pasture of his saints, where neither Sathan is, nor danger to be feared!

As yet I toile in the sea, and whether I shall attaine vnto the port of saluation by reason of my troubles arising through so many contrarie windes, I am vtterly ignorant.

So that I am altogether out of quiet. Notwithstanding, it is a shield and comfort vnto mee, that I stil do behold the light of faith; that with-  
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a'l submission I seeke the fauour of my beloued; that I beare toward him a constant hope; that I will, not bee separated from his loue<sup>k</sup>; and that <sup>k Rom. 8.35</sup> I doo rest vpon his prouidence, and vnsearchable goodnes, more than vpon my telfe.

And therefore, though too too often I doo stagger, yea and fall too sometime into sinne: yet am I not to despaire, but rather continuallie to flie vnto him and to crie,

O Lord my GOD, haue mercie vpon mee, and suffer mee not to perish through my manifold tentations, but assist me faithfully, that valiantly I may resist, and ouercome.

Reach out thy right hand vnto the worke of thine owne hands<sup>l</sup>, oh <sup>1 Iob 14.15</sup> thou which triest mee by Satan, and <sup>Psal. 95.7</sup> settest mee oftentimes on thy left hand.

And if any such temptation shall come, as will stay mee from crying vnto the Lord, then will I sigh from the bottom of mine heart. For he knoweth euen the verie secrets of the hart<sup>m</sup>, and is priuie to the groanings of the spirit<sup>n</sup>. 't is not his will <sup>m Psal. 7.9</sup> that any one euen of the least should <sup>n Rom. 8.26</sup> 27

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°Ma. 18. 14 perisſi °.

Oh, how great was his goodnes to mee-ward, in that it pleased him to be present with me in my trouble, when I did not know, nor could mark so much! For often he preserved me from being vtterlie giuen ouer vnto my wicked affections.

°ps. 119. 73

Through his secret iudgment it came to passe now and then, that I fel, & was foiled euē in trifles, that I might not waxe proude, and be high minded for great things, but learn throgh humiliation, how I was nothing euen then when I seemed to stand vpright, and to flourish.

°1. cor. 4. 7

And therefore I wish you not ouer-rashlie, or quickly to commend mee, though I seeme to prosper in your sight, but reserve all praise vntill the good day of my death, yea rather praise the Lord, and not me.

°Lu. 3. 14

Giue the glorie vnto G O D on high, which assisted mee in all my tentations.

For hee deliuered mee of his mercie manie a time, when I was taken of mine enemies.

°psal. 18. 14

Also, when they came as a whirlewinde to destroie mee, hee sent out his arrowes, and scattered them, and

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and he encreased lightnings and appalled them, so that they left me for a time. Because hee would not haue mee to bee without that, which from time to time he hath acquainted his saints withall.

1 Act. 14.

So that I had afterward a little quietnes, and peace, by the meanes of my friend.

22

Pl. 34. 19

Whereupon, I did betake mee not vnto bodilie, or worldlie, but vnto spirituall ease, beholding the earth a far off, and casting my thoughts vpon the secrets of heauen.

u Col. 3. 1

2.

I gaue diligence to see what manner of person I am, and how I might best please him, which had reuealed vnto me so manie tokens of loue, far beyond all deserts of mine.

And so much as in mee laie, I wished continuallie for this ioyfull peace, the better to cleane vnto him, and to serue him the more freele.

But manie times the soule hath not her desire. But sometime it is graunted, sometime vpon good consideration it is differred.

For who would not wish still to rest vnder the shade of the beloued, if it might bee graunted him, and if time and place were conuenient?

G 2

But

*The fourth booke*

But now my friend worketh with me againe.

I feele not affliction alway, neither yet doo I enioy continuall rest, but by an euening and morning a day is made.

For this mortall life is spent in comming and going both through  
 \* AG. 14. 22. prosperitie and aduersitie \*.

This was in the minde of that saint  
 y Iob. 7. 13 which said y.

*Thou dost visit him in the morning,  
 and trieſt him euerie moment.*

Notwithstanding, it seemeth a kinde of rest, if the enimie doo neither too often, nor too importunate-  
 lie assaile.

And therefore when it shall bee granted mee euen a little to rest my selfe sweetely in my beloued, I will take it in good part, and reioyce. I will reioyce I say, yea and alwaie reioyce for that grace of God.

Moreover, it maketh me bold to pray vnto him in all my necessities, because he hath freely preuented me so oftentimes with his mercifull visitation.

For when hee doth but approach, minding to keepe holie day with mee, euen then suddainlie there shineth

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meth a light ouer mine heart, which forthwith driueth out the cloudes of all wicked cogitations, whereby I do enioye the long desired cleerenes of God his light.

Because no vncleane, nor filthie thing can stand where hee entreth in<sup>2</sup>, for hee loueth puritie<sup>2</sup>, and is the<sup>2</sup> Reue. 21.37 ingraffer of the same; so that of ne- a Matth. 5.8 cessitie all satanicall illusion, together with the pomps of this worlde, must be packing.

Therefore my passions and tentations which I did endure being suppressed, I began both the more euidentlie to knowe, and the more earnestlie to loue, and the more hartlie to praise him, for vouchsafing at the length to beate back the damned crew of the wicked from assailing me.

For they doe disturbe my peace, & sin doth so shut vp my mouth, that I am ashamed to speake vnto my welbeloued.

But in vaine do they bend themselves against his power and wisdom, because euen in a moment hee can slide downe into mine heart, and poure in secretlie good motions, that I may both contemne, and vtterlie

*The fourth booke*

neglect all their priuie whisperings.

O my faithfull, and all happie freend, take mee so vnto thee, whensoever thou shalt perceiue mine affections to bee either pressed downe at anie time with the waight of sin, or to be held with vnnecessarie busines, that I may not wander farre astray from thee after the swarme of wicked cogitations, and so ouerhastilie be deprived of thy grace, without which I shall not be able to enioy thy friendship.

For thou art my Lord, and my  
**b Mat. 4. 10.** God<sup>b</sup>, which by thy word dost both  
heale, and sanctifie; which holdest  
**e Psal. 66. 9.** my soule in life<sup>c</sup>, and sufferest not  
my feete to slip, but deliuerest me  
from the euill daie, and from the  
snares of death.

Oh, how manie haue bin cast off, & vtterlie perished, that haue bin much more innocent than I am!

And therefore my soule, praise  
thou the Lord, and all that is within  
**d Psal. 103. 1** mee blesse his holie Name<sup>d</sup>.

<sup>2.</sup> My soule, I say, praise thou the Lord, and forget not all his benefits.

It is all too little, and far vn sufficient whatsoeuer thou shalt either thinke, or speake, or promise to his  
praise.

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praise. For hee exceedeth all praise,  
and is much sweeter than anie mu-  
sick.

Wherefore my soule cleaueth to  
thee alone, and loueth thee aboue  
all other gifts, notwithstanding it be  
exceedingly beautifull and sweete  
which of meere good will thou hast  
sent vnto me.

For thou alone art the spouse: as  
for all things else they are gifts, and  
arguments of loue. e Mar. 9, 15

In steede of thee I will not loue  
them; neither will I belecue that a-  
ny thing, or all things in the world can  
suffice mee, if I haue not thee: for  
in so dooing, I may perchance forgo  
thee with them too.

Thou giuest me leaue to vse many  
things for thy sake; but I may not  
enioy so much as one thing in thy  
steed. ff Exod. 20, 3

And therefore, O Christ my sweet  
spouse, I haue preferred thee afore  
all other things, and my care hath  
bin aboue all things to loue thee.

Wherefore, graunt that blessedlie  
I may enioie thee, and in that vnion  
euerlastingly to triumph in happines  
together with thee.

But how farre am I come?, I haue

*The fourth booke.*

lengthened my speech more than perhaps you would. But pardon me, good freend. For I haue bin caried aloft through the loue of mine e'peciall, and onely freend; and would to God it would please him still to lift vp both me and you too, in contemplation!

Let him prouide an heauenlie ascension, but let vs not keepe a base going downe.

**M.** Aske you me, whether I am forsaken at anie time of my beloued?

**S.** Yea, I say so.

**M.** But how do you behaue your selfe in trouble?

**S.** I take all things as patientlie as I can, expecting his comming.

Naturallic I am griued: but as touching my spirit, I haue inward patience; that my greefe proue not incurable. For I forget not, how he that loueth, liueth in paine.

**g Rom. 1. 17.** I liue by faith; I beleue the holie Scriptures; I giue credit to the words of comfort. And although I endure affliction: yet I doubt not, neither indeede ought I to doubt, but that God (when it pleaseth him) can send me ease.

For true, and to bee credited are those



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those woordes which are declared.  
Because the verie sainets themselues  
haue beene exercised in manie, and  
proued in like things <sup>h</sup>.

<sup>h</sup> Heb. 11. 4  
5. 6. & c.

Nature continually doth with for  
quietnes, and seeketh to be comforted  
in some thing: but the spirit notwithstanding  
is readie to sustaine whatsoeuer the will of God is I should  
endure <sup>i</sup>.

<sup>i</sup> Mar. 14. 38

If therefore I shall be lesse zelous,  
and lesse willing to doe good, my punishment  
shall be the more grieuous.  
*Though he slaie me, saith the wiseman <sup>k</sup>, k Iob. 13. 15*  
*yet will I trust in him.*

If I loue virtues, patience is a great  
virtue: therefore let patience euer-  
more bee retained For the more  
praise we purchase, the more paines  
we take in bringing things to passe.

And that our virtue may bee pro-  
ued, and made the more glorious,  
we are commonlie exercised by con-  
trary euent.

Therefore whensoever any such  
triall shal happen, be not out of heart,  
neither fall downe; but reteine thou  
patience, and extoll the righteous-  
nes of God. The Lord is not so hard  
and pitilesse, that he can suffer you  
to abide long vncomforted.

*The fourth booke*1<sup>st</sup> Cor. 10.  
verse 10

Onelie haue a care, that you neither lament immoderatelie, nor yet murmur against the righteous and iust God, because you are forsaken<sup>1</sup>, least the wicked spirit dooe send vnto you more greuous tentations of your faith, whereby being ouersearefull, you shall extreamelie bee afflicted.

Wherefore beare a little, and suppress your sorrowe, although the griefe both of your heart and bodie be neuer so great.

Abide constant in that good purpose, which at the first you intended to keepe. For it is good, especiallie at such an extremity, to cast all confidence vpon the beloued.

Looke thou patiently for God his heauenly comfort, so shall you speedily perceiue a speciall fauor, & sight of God.

Lo, you haue a faithfull witnesse, saying<sup>u</sup>, *I waited patiently for the Lord, and he inclined vnto me, and heard my crie.*

And that in your neede you maye finde the like fauour, I doo wish you both earnestly to pray your selfe, and desire others to praie for you also, and so commit your selfe whollie

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to his will and ordinance, that hee may deale with you euen as it shall please him ; and saie to him with a good conscience :

In thine hands are my woorks, thou knowest how it goeth with me ; thou knowest what I suffer ; and now, if it be thy will, I shall speedily be comforted.

Notwithstanding, let that be doon which seemeth right, & good in thine eyes, and haue mercie on me, a desolate, and miserable wretch, pitiously complaining vnto thee.

It therefore thou continue in patience and long-suffering, and for a little trouble, swarue not from the faith and loue in Iesus Christ, assure your selfe the brightnes of God his fauor will returne, and illuminate thee most gloriously with his beames of spirituall comfort. And so the beloued at his returne shall bee more deere vnto thee, than if he had neuer bin absent.

For the sentence of God his displeasure is not past calling back ; neither is he so offended, that he may not be reconciled againe.

Doubtlesse hee will speedily, and easilie be at one with thee, if thou

giue

*The fourth booke*

giue diligence, and promise afterward both to be more carefull that you sin not, & earnest to leade a virtuous life.

If thou wilt yeeld to these wholesome admonitions, doubt you not, thy beloued will be with you as afore, and at his presence you will receiue

n Psa. 31. 19 much comfort, saying <sup>n</sup>:

*How great is thy goodnes, which thou hast laid vp for them that feare thee! which thou hast doon for them which trust in thee, vnder the shadow of thy wings thou wilt protect them!*

O Zion, thou shalt be renewed, & see thy King which is to raigne in thee.

Thy beloued is the King of power\*, whose hinder partes are in the palenes of gold, but his head is pure gold.

Thus much maie suffice to be said for your comfort.

As for other things concerning the change of the beloued, namelie, howe hee appeareth sometime, and sometime runneth too and fro, in the next discourse you shall receiue, and heare them euen from his owne mouth.

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## CHAP. 17.

1. The maiestie, and omnipotencie of  
God. 2. How, and why the Lord afflicteth  
his children,



Marvelous are thy  
works, and my soule  
knoweth it right wel.  
How is it o my be-  
lowned, that I am thus  
dealt withall? Why  
hast thou forsaken

ap. 139. 14

me? Answer, I beseech thee.

Thou didst leaue me, and wentest,  
and camest againe. And heerei thou  
diddest wel. For hadst thou not made  
a speedie returne, I had fainted wel-  
nigh; but thou tookest compassiō vp-  
on me, being priuie to all my secrets.

For through your departure I was  
verie sad: and now for your returne  
I am glad againe.

Notwithstanding for my learning  
sake, tell, what good meaning had  
you therein? What auaieth it you  
so to leaue, and afflict me?

Take you pleasure in hearing? Tarry  
with vs, for it is towards night.

b. Ia. 24. 29

O come, and sit among vs; for lo, I  
and

*The fourth booke*

and another dilciple are very desirous  
to heare you speake, and we heartlie  
prate you to instruct vs.

Speake boldly what it shall please  
you, and if you think good, turne your  
speech vnto mee. I doo heare none  
with such pleasure as I doo you. And  
whosoeuer else dooth speake, his  
speech is gratefull, & well listened vn-  
to of me, for your sake that speake  
within him.

And therefore your speech shall  
bee to me more sweete, than either  
the honie, or the honie combe: For  
they passe in sweetenelle all other  
woordes.

Let now your voice sound in mine  
eares.

So then the voice of the beloued  
thundered, and said:

**L.** I am the Lord which speake right-  
eousnes \*; And who is like mee in  
counsell and wisedome?

**Esa. 45. 19** Who made the sea, and the drie  
land? I, the Lord, forming the light,  
and creating the darknes \*.

**Esa. 45. 7. 8** Who hath entred into the sea,  
and brought forth waters out of the  
deepe? Euen I, the Lord, which  
search the hearts and the reines \*.

**psal. 7. 9** Who hath knowen all things past,  
and

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and is priue vnto the things to come?  
Euen I, the Lord, which haue doon  
all thinges in meafure, number, and  
weight f.

f Wiſ. 11. 17

I am the creator both of heauen  
and earth g; the ruler of this worlde  
h; the knower of hidden thinges i;  
the reuealer of ſecrets k; the poſſeſ-  
ſor of the whole worlde l, and the be-  
holder of the cauſes of all particu-  
lars.

g Eſa. 42. 5  
h 1. Ti. 1. 17  
i 1. Reu. 3. 15  
k Eccl. 42. 10  
l Mat. 10. 26  
1 pſa. 50. 12

I am God, and change not m, who  
haue continuallie with me the cauſes  
of all changes in the worlde.

m Mal. 3. 6

I am God the almightie n, whoſe  
power is invincible o; I am God the  
moſt high p, whoſe highneſſe can not  
bee attained q; I am God, the moſt  
righteous r, whoſe being can not be  
conceiued ſ.

n Gen. 35. 11  
o Reuel. 4. 8  
p Reuel. 11. 17  
q Rom. 9. 19  
r Eſa. 14. 14  
ſ 1. Peſa. 139. 7  
8. & c.

I am for my preſence euery-where  
t, and yet no where to be ſeene u.

t Mat. 19. 17  
u 1. Iob. 11. 7. 8  
& c.

I am the moſt ſpiritually, and far-  
theſt from the ſenſes of man x.

x pſa. 139. 7. 8

I beare all things, yet neuer bur-  
dened y, and I fill and rule each place,  
and yet vnſtretched.

y 1. Iob. 23. 8. 9  
x 1. Iohn. 1. 13  
y Heb. 1. 3

I behold both things paſt, & things  
to come alike, as though they were  
preſent z.

z Wiſ. 8. 8

I ſurpaſſe all creatures both ſpiri-  
tuall

Eccl. 47. 32

*The fourth booke*

apſa. 35. 10 tuall, and corporall <sup>a</sup>.

I am diuerſlie to be named: yet no thought is able to conceiue mee as I am.

I ſhewe my ſelfe ſuddenly, and forth-with when one would little thinke, I am gone againe.

b1. Tim. 6. 16 I am indeed the inviſible God <sup>b</sup>, which after a thouſand waies declare my preſence to my friends

And thus I ſpake vnto the louing ſoule:

I will hide my face for a little ſeaſon, I will forſake her for a while, to ſee if her loue be pure, and vnfaigned.

It is a great matter to loue vnfaignedly. For that is to loue mee neither for her owne ſake, nor for any temporall commoditie, or ſpiritual comfort; but to loue mee, and me

c Mat. 4. 10

only <sup>c</sup>, and that for mine owne ſake, and that to the end, and that in hope of nothing at mine hands.

It is not in euerie one thus to loue mee; but this prerogatiue of pure louing, is properly to the perfect ſoule.

But ſhe that is yet vnperfect, hath great neede often to be prooued, and exerciſed, that ſhee may know both  
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*of the Imitation of Christ.*

how much she loueth mee, and howe greatlie she despiseth her selfe.

For you said in your hart: Truly I doe loue (Christ) yea, and often you repeate the same thing, I loue him indeede.

But I credit not words, or thoughts onely. For I will make due tryall of that loue.

When I am present, and speake faire; when I either put, or encrease good motions in the minde; when I graunt prosperitie most commonly or pleasure, then can you say with all deuoutnes, *O my beloued, I doe loue you.* And you say well. For I am greatlie to be loued, and you are at no time either to thinke, or speake otherwise than frendlie, and honourably of mee.

But for prosperitie, and good turnes only to loue, and to comend me, what great thing is it? Because euen sinners doe the same. For when they haue receiued what naughtilie they craued, they oftentimes blesse mee for the same. But praise is not seemely in the mouth of the sinner<sup>d</sup>.

*d Ecclus. 15.*

9

He therefore which either for some profit, or comfort receiued, dooth loue mee, dooth no more than a couetous

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*The fourth booke*

uetous man dooth. But exceede him,  
I saie, exceede him, & proceede vnto  
greater righteousnes.

Be ashamed still to be weake and  
tender; learne to eate mans meate,  
bee not still fed with the milke of  
children.

Attaine thou to the companie of  
the stoute Dauids, that can hold both  
speare, and sword, and shield.

Take vp the crosse, and followe  
e Luk. 9. 33 mee.

Make hast to bee in the number  
of them, which haue learned to beare  
diuers afflictions, and much banish-  
ment for my name sake. You are too  
much giuen vnto ease.

I purpose to trie you, and to turne  
vnto the other side, that you may  
knowe what you can suffer, least you  
seeme ouer innocent and holie in  
your owne conceipt.

Tribulation, and anger, and mine  
heauie displeasure, together with  
sore tentations of wicked spirits, shall  
come vpon you. Some vniustlie shall  
spoyle you of your goodes; others  
shall take no compassion vpon you;  
others shall defame; others shall re-  
siste; others shall ouercharge; o-  
thers shall carrie you perforce whi-  
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*of the Imitation of Christ.*

ther you would not goe; some outwardlie, others inwardlie, shall trouble you. Some shall be aduanced vnto hie degree, and honour, but you shall be left vnto reproches, and endure seruile paines. In all these, yea and in greater things you shall bee prooued, whether you are a valiant soldier of mine, or no.

I will depart, and not giue ouer, vntill I haue made sufficient triall, whether you blesse me to my face.

Now if I finde, that from the hart vnfaignedlie you doe loue mee, and continuallie doe praise my name, then is it meete that from thenceforth I call you Spouse, and that you shall haue a secret chamber with mee.

But if I perceiue that you cannot beare my correction, but will iudge my punishment to be ouer-sharp, and still bewaile mine absence, wishing for mee with hartie and earnest desire, I will sende you my staffe, that you may arise thereby, and afterward my selfe will come, and restore you againe vnto my woonted fauor. For it is not my will that you should vtterlie faint: because him that loveth me, I will loue to the ende.

And

f Iohn, 13. 1.

*The fourth booke*

And although your loue be not so perfect as could be wished; yet I will not despise you, but prouide that you may growe on in louing. For my care is that you doe well; and therefore mistrust me not.

I know what you can endure: which maketh me to temper my course, that you bee not tempted aboue your strength, and so faint.

And if I staie, in your opinion, some-what too long, looke for mee vntill the daie of my visitation. For comming I will come, and performe my promise.

Bee you still in prayer, still meditating vpon the holie scripture, and alway be patient, and suffer.

I am not ignotant but your greefe will bee much: but so quicklie to bee ouerthrowen, and to bee out of all hope of my returne, I cannot like that.

Where is your faith? A great faith you had neede of, especiallie on this behalfe: for although you see not mee, yet are you seene of mee, in  
 8 Eccles. 23  
 19 to whose hands you are to commend both your selfe, and all that you haue.

For although you are not priuie

*of the Imitation of Christ.*

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to my iudgements: yet hauing a  
strong faith, you must of necessitie say  
*Righteous are thou, O Lord, and iust are thy iudgements.* *h psal. 119*

137.

So then bee of good comfort, for  
this affliction is not to your destructi-  
on, but for the glorie of God.

I denyed your petition, because I  
would haue due prooffe of your faith  
and loue.

For, all this I did that you should  
well vnderstand both your own weak-  
nes, and my goodnes.

*ip sal. 119. 67*

I knowe what you are, better  
than your selfe doth. Yea, I haue kno-  
wen you thoroughlie, not of late, but  
from euerlasting.

*71.  
k psal. 7. 9.  
1 w sal. 8. 8*

Wherefore acknowledge the bene-  
fit which you haue by mee; behold  
how miserable you should bee, if once  
I forsake you.

As yet you haue not profited suf-  
ficientlie in the knowledge of your  
selfe. And because it is verie expedi-  
ent that you haue that knowledge, my  
will was that by experience you should  
attaine thereunto.

It is verie good for you to bee for-  
saken, to be troubled, to be humbled  
sometime, that so the better you  
may euen sensiblie perceiue your  
owne

*The fourth booke*

napl. 119. owre weakenes <sup>m</sup>.

71 I knowe right well this will make you a good disciple of mine. And what, I pray you, haue you lost, if heereby you prooue more wise and watchfull?

Oftentimes you are too arrogant, and forgetfull of your selfe, thinking that goodnes to be within you which is not; selfe-loue doth deceiue you, and while you thinke not of the giuer, you doe abuse the gift. I made you drunke; but you forgot how the grape did growe vppon mine owne vine.

Trie your selfe a little, acknowledge your strength. If that which you had came of your selfe, why did you not holde it? But if you could not hold it, confesse that you receiued it from abroad. And therefore ascribe all the honor to the mercie of God, and openlie confesse, how without mee you can doe nothing.

n 1. Cor. 4

Iam. 1. 17.

o loh. 15. 5

Consider both in what steede I stand you, and how able also I am to confirme you in all goodnes.

Where were you before I called you, but weltering in sin and wickednesse? And now how would you wander, if I directed you not? Yea, and when

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*of the Imitation of Christ.*

when also went it well with you, if you had not my fauor?

S. And I saide, At no time, sweet Lord. Thou alone, art my singular good friend, in all things, and aboue all most faithfull.

L. Why then did you purpose so wickedlie with your selfe, to goe after strange louers?

What misliked you in me; was it either my maiestie, or my bewtie?

S. Ah Lord, there is none comparable to thee, either for bewtie, or for glorie, or for riches, or for authority; neither in heauen nor in earth is anie like vnto thee. For thou onely art most hie ouer all creatures.

The heauens are thine, the earth also is thine; thou hast laide the foundation of the worlde, and all that therein is.

Much is it that thou hast imparted vpon thy creatures, by which, thy beautie, wisedome, and goodnes doth appeare: but yet in comparison of thy blessed, and glorious presence, it is nothing. So that by experience I haue learned now, that I cannot lack thy companie one houre together, but with much grieve to my soule.

Returne

p 1 Kin. 8.

23

q psal. 89

11

t Rom. 1.

20

*The fourth booke*

L. Returne therefore vnto mee; thou haſt hitherto wandered enough about.

Let not hence-ſorth to bee more ſtaied, and milde, and faithfull, yea and to truſt in mee, not onely in the day of my gracious viſitation, but much more in the night of tentation.

I haue leryou ſlip, that being wearied, you might returne vnto mee the more ſpeedily, and beeing fruſtrate of outward comfort, at length vnderſtand how much you are bound vnto mee, that ſo often haue called vnto you.

And therefore liſten now at the laſt, for it is not without cauſe that ſometime you are forſaken; that you are colde ſometime in zeale; that it irketh you; that you are ouer-wearied with tentations; that on all ſides you are afflicted; that you can neither finde anie counſaile, nor feele comfort, but are enforced to endure anguiſh and miſerie at all times, and in all places.

I am abſent, to the ende you may knowe how needfull it is that I bee preſent with you, not onely in one matter, or in a ſpeciall cauſe, but in  
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*of the Imitation of Christ.*

eueme & Qion, in all places and times,  
so well earlie as late, wheresoeuer  
you shall become, go, or stand.

For this will teach you to walke  
warilie with your friend; to abstaine  
from vanities, and to take heede of  
offenses <sup>Mich. 6.8</sup>.

I doo leaue you, that you maie  
well vnderstand how much you are  
bound to loue mee, that is, that you  
maie see a manner how to loue mee  
indeed.

It is verie true you thought your  
selfe more stout, and happie, than in  
truth you were: but when I did once  
withdraw mine aide from you a little,  
it then appeared to the world howe  
you were verie poore, and misfe-  
rable <sup>1 Reu. 3. 17</sup>.

How shall your loue bee knowne,  
vnlesse you beare my yoake with pa-  
tience?

Sometime I see you to waxe slug-  
gish, and therefore I doo hide my  
selfe for an houre, like a friend stan-  
ding behinde the wall <sup>1 Song. 2. 9</sup>, that you  
maie be stirred vp the more zelously  
to seeke me.

I knowe for my part, and see all  
things <sup>x Ecclus. 4. 3</sup>; but troublous trials (which  
are good for many causes) (doo make  
<sup>verit. 19. 20</sup>

H I you

Whom God loueth, he  
fauoureth.

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Chap. 17

Chap. 17

*The fourth booke*

you the more heedie and wise in all  
your actions 7.

7 Ihu. 23. 19

Moreouer if you loue mee, you  
will not waxe the more sluggish in  
seeking mee for all this; if you like  
me, you will seeke me.

What? What you not, how riches  
painefullie come by, are kept most  
carefullie? who so wisheth rest, as  
the wearied man? Who loueth so  
kindlie, as hee which hath sighed  
most heauily? And is not that iewel  
which was lost, and is found againe,  
much more esteemed than before it  
was? So, euen so is the ioie double,  
and the mirth doubled, at the long  
wished presence of the beloued.

7 Luk. 15. 19

And therefore it is much for your  
profit that I withdraw my selfe; be-  
cause I doe it, not for any ill will  
to you-wardes, but vpon very good  
cause; so do I dally with my friends.

Let it suffice you at this time, that  
you haue bin in my fauor to heare so  
much at my mouth.

Besides, when you haue neede,  
returue vnto mee, and feare not.  
For I neuer shut mine eares against  
that person which humbly and ear-  
nestly crieth for mine assistance.

Mat. 7. 7. 8

Chap.

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CHAP. 18

1. The confidence of a true Christian.
2. God insisteth the vngodlie.
3. giueth whatsoever good is to man.
4. will haue no man to despaire.
5. but that all sinners should flie vnto his mercie.

**M**Y Lorde God will helpe mee, therefore shall I not be confounded.

a Iai. 50. y.

S. Let it grieue no bodie, though I loue much to speake with my Lord God, whose goodnes hath allured, & inflamed me both to pray and to meditate in such sort, that me thinks I should bee too hard and vnkinde, if I made none answer vnto his wordes.

But happelic some one will saie against mee, Therefore neither doe you feare God, seeing you are a soule sinner, vnworthie euen to line in this world.

Whence is it, that you dare so presume in your heart? And, beeing the least, and vilest of all others, with  
H a what

*The fourth booke*

what face can you thrust forth your  
selfe (o to talke with your Lorde  
God? Whom do you make your  
selfe?

a Ecclus. 15  
verse  
John. 9. 23

Oh, my louing Lorde, doe thou  
answere on my behalfe. For the  
mouth of the wicked is opened vpon  
me.

b Psal. 109. 3.

If I woulde iustifie my selfe, mine  
owne mouth shall condemne mee.  
And though I were cleane, yet did  
not my soule know so much.

c Job. 9. 20.

Oh Lord, thou knowest my follie,  
and my shamefastnes. Speake thou  
on my behalfe, and I full gladly will  
keepe silence.

L. Giue thou none heede to the  
wordes of the wicked: but rather do  
thou remember howe I haue saide,  
I came not to call the righteous, but the  
sinners vnto repentance.

d Mark. 2. 17

e Mat. 28. 17

Mark. 17. 3

Heb. 2. 8.

Am not I to do what I will? Who  
may resist my pleasure?

If I thinke it good to shew fauor  
to thee-ward, though little thou de-  
serue the same at mine handes, who  
shall reprove me therefore?

f Rom. 8. 33.

g John. 8. 7

He that is without sinne, let him  
throwe the first stone at thee. But  
if they, all the packe of them, are sin-  
ners, with what face can they finde  
fault

Chap. 18      149      Gods kindnes, mans happines  
*of the Imitation of Christ,*

fault with my fauor to thee-ward?

You haue not chosen mee <sup>h</sup>, but <sup>h</sup>Ioh. 15. 16.  
my mercy did preuent you.

Dareth anie yet murmure against  
you for comming vnto me? Comfort  
thy selfe, his murmure is not against  
thee, but flauie against my person,  
because it is I that receiue <sup>i</sup>, and eate <sup>i</sup> 1. Tim. 3. 15.  
with sinners <sup>k</sup>. <sup>k</sup> Matt. 9. 11.

12, 13

And why ought you not to chal-  
lenge mine acquaintance, the which I  
reioice to offer rather than to with-  
draw from any one?

S. Oh gracious Lorde, lay not this  
sinto their charge, but to mee, and to  
my sins.

I cannot denie, but deseruedlie  
they conceiue ill of mee; yea I doo  
openlie acknowledge this withall, that  
I am much more wicked than any mā  
doth knowe.

L. You do well thus to humble your  
selfe. For in so dooing, you shall euor  
gaine, and more easely obtaine my  
fauor.

Notwithstanding, I will not there-  
fore cast you away, because you are  
a sinner, and faultie, albeit that should  
make you both to thinke baselie of  
your selfe, and alway to haue in minde  
what great sinnes you are polluted  
<sup>h</sup> 3      withall

*The fourth booke*

withall.

But that you perish not through  
desperation, consider howe manie  
righteous men I haue made of sin-  
ners<sup>1</sup>, freendes of enemies, choo-  
sing the humble, and refusing the  
proude<sup>m</sup>.

I haue no neede of anie giste of  
thine<sup>n</sup>: onely this I require at your  
handes, namely, that you loue mee  
with a pure heart<sup>o</sup>, and I am satisfi-  
ed.

S. I am cleane dashed, for, alas, there  
is nought within mee to stir vp your  
loue thus to me-ward.

L. I do neither respect nor require  
the things that this world doth offer  
to get fauour withall; if you do loue,  
and that your loue bee feruent, and  
constant, it is all that I aske.

But, I pray thee, whose are the  
things that do, or may adorne a man?  
Are not all things mine, whatsoeuer  
doe glitter either in the bodie, or  
minde<sup>p</sup>?

p Iam. 1. 17.  
2 Cor. 4. 7.

As for that of the world, and which  
set out the bodie, they ought little to  
trouble your minde. But the changes  
which belong to the beautifying of  
vertue, it standeth you vpon to seeke,  
that you may please the Lord in the  
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*of the Imitation of Christ,*

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Howbeit, you haue well done in humbling, and accusing your selfe so well outwardly as inwardlie before the face of my maiesty, by confessing vnfaignedlie your great weaknes, and wickednesse, and by fetching deepe sighes, for that you are verie vnworthie to challenge the fauour of my familiaritie euen but one houre, beeing as I am, a glasse pure without spot <sup>9</sup>, q Wis. 7. 28 and you are a great sinner & vncleane <sup>r</sup> Gen. 8, as euen from your infancie <sup>r</sup>.

And therefore be euer mindefull both of your fraile condition, and of my glorious maiestie, and so with humble reuerence approch boldly into my presence.

For I am hee that putteth awaie thine iniquities, and will not remember thy sins <sup>r</sup>; it is I that iustifie the vngodlie <sup>r</sup>, and this I doe for mine <sup>r</sup> Isa. 43. 25 holie name sake; yea and I am still <sup>r</sup> Rom. 4. 5 readie to minister greater giftes of mercie vnto thee.

Because I doe euer choose to shew fauor rather then displeasure, as one who had rather spare than punish.

Yea, all this seemeth but little in mine eyes, neither am I so content with the first grace that I wil not adde

*The fourth booke*

a second, or a thirde rather, yea, in  
verie deede, as I can set none ende  
n Psa. 143. 9 to my mercies : so neither can the  
number of my giftes and benefits be  
x Psa. 68. 19 recited x.

Last of all, after that I for my part  
haue pardoned sinnes, and men for  
their partes by their goodnesse haue  
testified to the world their vnfeined  
repentance, then doe I restore for  
the most part the comfort of mine  
healthfull countenance, by powring  
in most plentifull maner the grace of  
mine holy spirit.

And although a sinner doe abide  
still in the flesh : yet doe I receiue  
him into my familiaritie, so that he is  
not to feare the vtter confusion for  
sins committed : but rather to thanke  
and praise God, that old thinges bee  
passed awaie, and that all things are  
become new y.

y 2. Cor. 5.

17

So gracious, and mercifull am I,  
that alwaies I am more readie to for-  
giue, than thou art to beg forgiuenes  
at mine handes ; more ready to giue,  
than thou art to aske.

Therefore whie feare you? What  
dismaieth you to approach vnto the  
side of such fauors? And why do you  
e strange your selfe from so greate  
kindnes



*of the Imitation of Christ.*

kindenes offered vnto you so frank-  
lie of mine own accord?

Doubtlesse, though you did cer-  
tainly vnderstand that I were pur-  
posed to giue you the deniall: yet  
ought you not to desist from praier,  
nor yet to be out of al hope of being  
heard; but so much the more ear-  
nestlie to be instant in crying, vntill  
you were heard.

For my mercies are infinite, and  
what I denie at one time, may bee  
granted fauourable at another.

How knowe you whether I will  
turne my face vnto you, and grant  
you the desire of your heart?

And what saith the Prophet con-  
cerning mee? Approche vnto him,  
and be illightened, so shall not your  
faces be confounded.

Wherefore accuse your slow com-  
ming vnto me rather than your of-  
ten approching; and rather your  
fearefull shamefastnes, than your  
prompt presuming of forgiveness.

To hope well of my goodnes, is a  
verie token of true humilitie, and of  
a great faith.

This doo I speake, that you may  
not offend; and that when you doo  
offend, you despaire not, but rise

*The fourth booke*

again with speede, For yet you haue  
hope, and an aduocate with the Fa-  
ther.

21, Iohn. 2, 1

What? Looke you to be all wor-  
thie before you make accesse vnto  
mee? And of your selfe when will you  
bee so?

It only such as are good and wor-  
thie, and great, and perfect, should  
approch vnto mee, to whome should  
sinners and publicans approch?

So then what saith the Gospell?

a Luke, 15, 1

*There resorted vnto him publicans, and  
sinners to heare him.*

Therefore let the vnwoorthie ap-  
proch, that they may become wor-  
thie; let the wicked approch, that  
they may bee made good; let the  
weake and vnperfect approch, that  
they may proue strong and perfect;  
yea let all and euerie one approch,  
that they may receiue from the a-  
bundant streames of the wel of life.  
I am the well of life, that cannot be  
drawne drie.

b Ioh. 4, 14

c Ioh. 7, 37

d Iſai. 55. 1

e Mat. 9, 13

He which is a thirst, let him come  
vnto me and drinke. And he which  
hath nothing, let him come and buy  
without siluer and without monie.  
He that is sicke, let him come to be  
healed. Hee that is neither hot nor  
cold,

*of the Imitation of Christ.*

cold let him come to be inflamed<sup>r</sup>. f Mar. 9. 24

Hee that is feareful, let him come to be encouraged; he that is sorrowfull, let him come to be comforted.

He that is withered, let him come to be fatted; he that is wearied with cares, let him come to bee refreshed with ioy.

Lo my delight is to be with the children of men<sup>s</sup>.

g Rom. 8. 31

Hee that desireth wisdom, let him come vnto my lessons<sup>b</sup>.

h Isa. 119. 9

Hee that seeketh riches, let him come to receiue those which are eternall, and incorruptible<sup>i</sup>.

i Mat. 6. 19

Hee that hunteth for honor, let him come to get an euerlasting name in the inheritance of heauen; hee that wisheth for felicity, let him come, and hee shall taste the soueraigne, eternall, and infinite happiness<sup>k</sup>.

k 1. cor. 1. 9

I, euen I it is which giueth al temporall good things<sup>l</sup>, yea and besides that, I giue eternall riches in the heauens<sup>m</sup>. And what I promise I will performe, at such time as my commandements are duly obserued. And he then shall bee crowned gloriouslie in heauen, that hath foughten couragiously in this world.

n 2. Tim. 2. 15

Chap.

## The fourth booke

## Chap. 19.

I. The desire of a Christian Soule is  
*neuer satisfied, tili God bee enioyed,*

2 No comfort anie whit com-  
 parable to the spirituall  
 ioie.

2 Psa. 19. 14



*ET the meditation  
 of mine heart bee accep-  
 table in thy sight.*

What can be more  
 comfortable, What  
 more ioyfull to the faithfull Soule,  
 than still deuoutly to meditate vpon  
 her Lord God; that whome she can-  
 not as yet beholde in a cleere, and  
 blessed sight, at the least she may, as  
 it were, make him present by earnest  
 calling him into minde?

Therefore let her behold him as  
 in a glasse darkelie <sup>b</sup>, whome shee is  
 not to see face vnto face.

And albeit she may not haue a full  
 sight of him in his maiestie: yet let  
 her search for him by types in the  
 Scriptures.

Oh that the care to seeke the  
 face of the Lord did neuer waxe cold  
 within me, but daily more and more  
 encreased;

Howbeit,

*of the Imitation of Christ.*

Howbeit, the soule that loueth  
God, hath a wonderfull desire to  
enioie the sight of God. For to see  
him is happines indeede, and the  
absolute felicity.

c Reu. 22. 4

Wherefore she desireth this blef-  
sednes, that, her whole appetite ha-  
uing attained her ende, she may be  
satisfied, and at quiet: for nothing  
in the world is able to content her.

d Eccle. 1, 8

For long experience hath taught  
her, that the more shee straieth from  
celestiall happines, the more vnhap-  
pie and vnquiet she is, inasmuch as  
in this world nothing is permanent,  
or durable, that may assuage the  
heat of her affection.

e 1. Cor. 7. 31

1. Iohn. 2. 15

16. 17

So then let her make returne vnto  
him that made her, and let her de-  
sire to be blessed of him, who at the  
first created her.

f Gen. 1. 26

27

Wisd. 2. 23

For doubtlesse, he that made the  
soule, must satisfie the soule with  
good things. Because, such a de-  
fire hath hee instilled into her, that  
hee being gon, nothing will con-  
tent her; nor any ioie comfort her  
greatlie.

g p<sup>a</sup>. 103. 5

And therefore, soule of mine, stand  
not heere still, for this is no place of  
rest for thee: but mount aloft, as-  
cende

*The fourth booke*

cende vnto him that made thee. For he hath now sent his messengers, & biddeth thee to ascend.

So many desires of eternall life as he inspireth, so many messengers hee doth sende. Which being entertained, prepare thy selfe to thy iournaie.

Then goest thou on, when thou desirest to see him; when thou laborest to please him; when thou renouncest this worlde; when thou doost, whatsoeuer thou doost, euen of pure loue to him-ward.

For had hee not first sought thee, and powred holie cogitations into thy brest, thou couldst neuer seeke him.<sup>n</sup>

*h Joh, 6. 44*

For that soule dooth languish, not for loue, but through wearines, which is not inlightened with the beames of the eternall sunne.<sup>i</sup>

*John, 1. 9*

But, it through the sweete blastes of the Southren winde, her frozen coldnes, and sorrowe bee once resolved, then by reason of the light inspired, and incomprehensible diuinity, she beginneth to swear, through the hornes of loue.

Oh infinite heate of the true Sonne, what boilings doost thou cause then within the heart of the  
louer!

*of the Imitation of Christ.*

louer? Thou dissoluest the darknes  
of a sorrowfull minde, and bringest  
the laborious toile vnto nothing.  
The long time and daies of pouerty  
thou doost comfort and that abund-  
antly, with one simple beame of  
thy glorious light.

Oalue of the sorrowfull! O shi- k Mat. 9. 12  
ning light of such as wander and  
seekel

Shine thou continually vpon mee;  
prepare thou a mansion place within  
mee, euen till thine euermlasting light  
do appeare.

Oh how sweete, and how comfor-  
table will thy presence bee I seeing  
euen of a little remembrance, so un-  
speakeable ioy doth arise.

Howe gladlie can I turne vnto  
thee; how frankely doo I renounce  
euen this world, that I may be com-  
forted with thine heauenly fauor!

For it will bee none hard matter  
for the soule which longeth for the  
sight of thy countenance, to bereaue  
her selfe of all outward pleasure,  
when shee shall either feelee nowe a  
greater in the minde, or very short-  
ly expect with a perfect faith for the  
same.

Furthermore, none is to be so for-  
liffe.

*The fourth booke*

lish as to thinke, that thou wilt leaue the deuout soule anie long while vn-comforted; or that the gifts of thy fauour which she is to receiue for all her conquests ouer nature, shall bee small: for no earthly comfort, whatsoever it bee or whence soeuer it arise, is any whit comparable either in the qualitie or quantitie of sweetness to the heavenly ioy.

And therefore labor thou, O faithfull soule, to shew thy selfe such toward thine heavenly spouse Christ, that he may continually bee gracious and fauourable vnto thee; for through him and in him you shall in most abundant manner finde that, which exceedinglie shall minister comfort vnto you in all extremities.

The oftener you haue accessse vnto him, and the nigher you doe approche vnto his side, the sweeter he will appeare, and the more amiable in your eies.

But if you withdrawe your selfe, then the losse will be your owne; and he abiding in his beautie, shall feelee neither grieve nor trouble.

You stand in need of his, but he of no mans goodnes.

So that you may become blessed through



*of the Imitation of Christ.*

through him, but so cannot hee by  
your proceeding.

Hee alone sufficeth himselfe; hee  
alone can neither bee augmented,  
nor diminished.

Through his goodnes all thinges  
are, whatsoeuer bee, whether they  
haue life, sense, or vnderstanding<sup>l</sup>.

1 A<sup>c</sup>. 17. 28

And therefore iust it is that all  
creatures euerlastingly should blesse  
him<sup>m</sup>.

m Psa. 150. 6

Oh how gladly would I discourse  
and speake of him vnto thee, if I  
were able sufficiently so to doo!

But what? He neither is, nor may  
be vttered. Againe, as he cannot be  
vttered by meanes, so can he not bee  
conceiued in mind.

Which being so, thinke notwithstanding  
of thy Creator so well as  
man may, taking the remembrance  
of his aboundant sweetnes for a com-

fort, vntill such time as hee re-  
uealeth the sight of his

owne countenance  
vnto thee in the  
heauens<sup>n</sup>.

n Reue. 22. 4



CHAP.

## The fourth booke

## CHAP. 20.

1. A complaint of the Soule for  
the want of her blessed state, 2. What  
weeping pleaseth God. 3. Who truly  
blessed. 4. A description  
of God.

a Psa. 31. 22



Said in mine heart I am  
cast out of thy sight <sup>a</sup>.

Mine heart is wound-  
ded within me, throug  
the long differring of  
thy glorie,

I will speake therefore, and reason  
with my griued Soule. The great  
zeale of leue compelleth mee to  
speake, and suffereth nothing to bee  
concealed from thee.

What then shall I saie? Lo my  
God, in peace is my most bitter bit-  
ternes.

He that is ignorant, wotteth not  
the meaning heereof But it is not so  
with mee. I knowe, and I vnderstand  
it, and therfore I am not ashamed to  
sing with the Prophet.

b Psa. 38. 15.  
e Reuc. 3. 15  
Ecclus. 4 3,  
verse 20

I speake to thee my Lord <sup>b</sup>, who  
knowest all things <sup>c</sup>; and giuest both  
knowledge and vnderstanding ac-  
cording to thy good pleasure, that  
neither

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*of the Imitation of Christ.*

neither I maie glorie more than is meete I shoulde; nor the foole aduance mee, when in trueth I am simple.

I maie confesse them what I haue receiued from thee. And yet what neede haue I to tell you thereof, when as you are neither ignorant, nor can take anie pleasure of the same.

Againe, what comfort can come vnto you, which are the comfort of the comfortlesse?

So that the profit is mine, which doe lack the consolation of wordes, thereby to stir vp mine affection to thee-ward, and to finde some ease for my desolate soule.

For, seeing I may not behold thy presence; I will bewaile thine absence; because euen this is a token of loue, and a great pleasure to the louing soule.

Nowe then the sense of this sentence appeareth. Because it is rightly saide of the louing soule, howe the more seruently she loueth, and the more earnestly she longeth after eternall things, the more truly she feelth the power thereof working within her.

They

*The fourth booke*

They are not cold wordes, but to the vnkinde soules; neither deafe organs, but to the hardened hart.

The louing and zealous soule knoweth this wel; and is so often inflamed in heart, as she is pricked with the desire of eternall peace.

And therefore shee speakeih to thee her Lord God, not to men, of whom she would not be known.

And although sometime shee talketh with men: yet that which they heare is to the outward sense. But whatsoeuer she saith to thee, it is to the verie soule, and rather by sighing of the hart, than by sounding words.

Lo (saith she) in peace is my most bitter bitternes. As it shee said; After that of thy goodnes I returned vnto the peace of minde, the transitorie state of the world began to be still more grieuous vnto mee. For I see in this peace, how farre I am separated from the soueraigne peace.

And indeede beeing first busied with earthly desires, and mooued with diuerse passions, I was greatly hindered from spirituall cogitations; and so from heauenlie contemplation, after which I should haue much longed: but that could I least

of

*of the Imitation of Christ.*

of all doe, because through sloth-  
fulness I did forgo all sense of inward  
sorrow.

But now seeing the troubles of idle  
thoughts are taken awaie, I do som-  
what rest in the peace of conscience,  
and am drawne vnto heavenly mat-  
ters with mine whole heart, and I do  
more lament, that I do not enioy the  
good things of God, than erst I did  
mourne being vexed with the trou-  
bles of this world.

So that it is bitternes to my soule  
euen to liue in this worlde, and to  
goe vnder the heauie burden of sin.  
But it is bitterest of all, when so much  
as I may, all mine affections beeing  
gathered together, I do enioie now  
the good things of the hart, and bend  
my selfe, euen with hartie zeale to-  
ward the armes of eternall peace,  
and yet may not attaine thereu to,  
because of the bondes of my mortall  
state.

And this makes mee euen with  
griefe of hart to crie vnto thee, and  
to saie:

*O wretched man that I am, who shall  
de'liuer me from the bodie of this death?* d Rom. 7. 24

Ther is none so greuous a burden  
vnto me, as stil to wander frō thee by  
liuing

*The fourth booke*

liuing in the world; for labouring in loue, I wish for no comforte beside thee.

• Eccles. 1. 8

For by good experience I haue long sithence learned, that my soule can neither bee satisfied with <sup>h</sup> good things, of this worlde <sup>e</sup>, nor yet bee blessed, vntill she be ioyned into thee in the celestiall habitation.

For as exceedingly she doth loue, burne, and vse contemplation while she is in the bodie: so will her desire bee insatiable vntill the bodie bee laid off,

And therefore her ende must bee made perfect by attaining the soueraigne felicitie, and the light of thy

• Reu. 22. 4

g 1. Tim. 6.

Reuel. 1. 5

Reuel. 17. 14

h Ps. 16. 11.

countenance. O King of heauen <sup>s</sup>, so amiable in all respects; O my ail louelie beioyned, euen whollie to be desired, when wilt thou fill mee with the light of thy countenance <sup>h</sup>; when wilt thou satisfie my longing with the well of life?

• Psal. 42. 2

My soule hath much thirsted after thee <sup>e</sup>; and greatly will bee troubled vntill she attaine thee.

Liuing in the world, and not seeing thee, I can take no comfort of whatsoeuer I beholde; so great the doth

*of the Imitation of Christ.*

doth zeale waxe hot, that not once,  
but often I breake into these words;

When shall I come, and appeare  
before the face of my God?

h. Psal. 42. 1.

And this loue of mine ceaseth not,  
but encreaseth more and more, in  
such sort, that I am driuen euen to  
weepe night and daie, while conti-  
nuallie I doe thinke with my selfe,  
*Where is now my God?*

For it is a comfort to the louing  
soule to weepe for thy sake, while she  
must want her desire; and still expect  
thy comming.

And these teares doe more feede  
and refresh the louing soule, than if  
shee enjoyed all the things of this  
world. For did shee loue them, shee  
would not weepe for thee.

1 Mat. 24. 6

Oh how blessed, & pleasing to thee  
is the sheading of such teares!

For they doe both kill the desires  
of secular and temporall ioyes; and  
also they obtaine the celestiall con-  
solation.

And therefore none do shed such  
holy teares, but they which are both  
singularly in loue, and verie notably  
religious.

Far of another kinde be the teares  
of such as miserable bee troubled in  
this

*The fourth booke*

this world.

m Psal. 119.  
verse. 137.

For one man weepeth because he is sicke; another for that hee is oppressed; another because he is iniured; another because his minde is contraried: but it is thou, religious soule onely, which powrest forth tears euen of pure loue to thy Sauior-ward: as for temporall damage, & worldly causes, they trouble thee not, for thou submittest thy selfe to the righteous iudgement of God<sup>m</sup>, and art thankful.

And for so doing, let no worldlie creature iudge thee either foolish, or impatient: because thy teares do not greene, but comfort; they doe not blur the face, but wash it; they hurt not the eyes, but they purifie the sight of the minde.

Howbeit, let others conceiue heereof as they will, I canne not thinke otherwise than well of you; for I doe wish to drinke deep of such teares.

S If you wish to weepe with mee, then may you bee comforted with mee.

Oh that your soule were as I am! you could neuer forget what I doe feele.

I



*of the Imitation of Christ.*

I knowe whome I credit; and sure  
I am it is a more easie thing to denie  
that there is any heauen and earth,  
than that there is a God.

And I knowe also hee is my full  
happines; and that I shall neuer bee  
blessed vntill I haue an absolute sight  
of his maiestie.

n Reu. 12.4

Whose sight because it is not yet  
granted me, nor alwaies assured me,  
doth make me to lament, inasmuch as  
I am depriv'd of happines, wrapped  
in the darknes of this life, and down-  
peised with the waight of mine owne  
infirmities, that I am not of power to  
suffer that wonderfull light, and that  
whatsoever I do think concerning the  
glory of heauen, is so little, and over-  
shadowed as it were with a cloude.

o Wic. 9.13

Hence it is that I double my com-  
plaint in steede of a song; and while  
they still say vnto mee, *Where is thy  
God?* my spirit is the more troubled,

p Pl. 4. 2. 10

For thus I thinke then, *where is my  
felicity? where is the full ioy of mine hart?  
where is my true peace and rest?*

Where be all the good things that  
are vnspeakeable, but onely in my  
God? And when shall I enioy them,  
vnles I bee ioyned vnto him, hauing  
nothing betweene?

I r

Yea,

*The fourth booke*

Yea, when shall I there bee? I knowe not, but I beleene well; I doo hope well, but yet I haue not.

Why then, where is my God, whome I loue so, and yet I see him not? through whose loue I am so often wounded; through whose absence I am so griued; through whose gracious visitation so refreshed sometime?

VWhere is my God, whome euen once to see, is to know all things?

Where is my God, in whom both mine heart, and my flesh doe so earnestly desire to reioyce?

Where is my God, for whose loue I suffer such paine and sorrow? His verie remembrance is sweete, but his presence is more louelie, and expelleth all sadnes from mine heart.

VWhere is mine hope, and my crowne? Is it not in thee my God, and in thy blessed countenance?

11. cor. 13  
verse 12

Oh, shewe mee once thy glory, and thy face: so will I cease to complaine.

If I contend a little with thee, O blame mee not; extreame zeale of good will hath many woonderfull deuises.

I am driven to expect, and moued still

of  
still  
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1. T  
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Chap.

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A

*of the Imitation of Christ.*

still to long; and so this ioyfull combat doth continue,

## CHAP. 21.

1. The delaying of the happie is patiently to be borne. 2. The felicitie of the life to come. 3. with a prayer for the same.



*Lord, I haue loved  
the habitation of thine  
house, and the place  
where thine honour dwel* a psal. 26. 8  
*leth.*

How gladlie I would be with thee,  
thou knowest full well O my GOD;  
and how entirly I desire the same, I  
am not able sufficiently to expresse.

I wish it, not onely when I am euill  
at ease; but also what prosperity soe-  
uer I enioy, my desire is to bee with  
thee.

But how shall my longing bee sa-  
tisfied?

Heere it grieueth mee to continue  
in, and yet of necessitie I must, but  
my desire is to bee with thee, and I  
may not yet.

And therefore I see no remedie,

I 2

but

bphil. 1. 23

*The fourth booke*

but that I am with patience to endure this delaie, and to refer my wishing to thine holy will,

For what? Is it meet I should murmur, when it must be so? God forbid.

Againe, I haue the examples of many of Gods children, which haue  
 b Heb. 11. 33. vied long patience in this life <sup>b</sup>, and  
 14. &c. yet their harts were in heauen <sup>c</sup>.

e Col. 3. 1. 2 Therefore if thy will be to prolong my pilgrimage, I am willing to abide and obey your pleasure.

Howbeit, that with lesse grieve I may beare my longing to bee with thee, I will till that time still meditate with my selfe of that celestially habitation.

Yet I presume not to pearce into the least of those ioyes, which thou  
 4 1 Cor. 2. 9 hast prepared for such as loue thee <sup>d</sup>: but of this and that I will meditate, so the end that mine affection beeing pressed downe and infected oftentimes, it may bee stirred vp, and lifted into the hope of eternall blisse.

O that that day had once shined, whither then had the ioyes of heauen vanished me!

How merrie at the heart should I bee then, and howe happie should I thinke my selfe!

Howe happie should I then bee,  
 enioy<sup>a</sup>

*of the Imitation of Christ.*

enjoying a continuall peace \* !

e Reue. 21.4

From thencefoorth should I make  
none enquire for any thing, seeing no  
secret could be hid.

But my life is spent in darkenesse,  
and therefore no maruell though my  
sight doe dazle betweene the clouds  
of glorie.

Notwithstanding I will lift vp mine  
eyes, and though as farre off, behold  
and salute that holie citie Ierusalem  
builded in the heauen euen of liuelie  
stones <sup>f</sup>, namely of holie angels and <sup>f</sup> Reue. 21.10  
men, replenished continuallie with <sup>11.</sup> &c.  
praise, and mirth, and magnifying the  
Lord their God for euer and euer.

Now therefore my soule, take vnto  
thee the wings of desire, and fly vp-  
ward, flie I saie from all bodilie sen-  
ses: ascend from the visible forme of  
this world, vnto the holie house of  
God, euen vnto the newe Ierusalem,  
builded substantially in aie lasting  
peace, crowned with glorie and ho-  
nor, and blessed with the abundance  
of all good things.

Lo. Wonderfull and vnspeakeable  
are the things (of heauen) which no  
man either can, or may vtter <sup>8.</sup>

g 1. Cor. 2.9

No sense is able to conceiue, nei-  
ther can the vnderstanding of man

*The fourth booke*

attaine to knowe, howe God is in his  
sainctes glorious, and wonderfull in  
his maieltie.

Mount thou in cogitation euen vnto  
to the highest things, stretch thy de-  
fire into the euerlasting eternitie, and  
say with the Prophet<sup>n</sup>; *Glorious things*  
*are spoken of thee, O citie of God.*

There whatsoeuer can be wished of  
man, is had<sup>i</sup>; and what is once got,  
is kept without care<sup>k</sup>.

God there is beheld face to face  
cleerely<sup>l</sup>, truly, continually, and e-  
ternallie.

There the blessed and all glorious  
Trinitie, in one voseparable vnitie,  
which of all the blessed citizens of  
heauen is worshipped, praised, & mag-  
nified<sup>m</sup>, is perfectly knowen.

There is mine onely and right sin-  
gularlie beloued friend<sup>n</sup>, which is  
more precious (to mee) than all ri-  
ches<sup>o</sup>, and the treasure aboue all to  
bee desired, euen my Lorde Iesus  
Christ<sup>p</sup>, the immortall spouse of the  
Church<sup>q</sup>, inwhome are hid<sup>r</sup> (but  
yet reuealed to the Saints) from the  
beginning of the worlde, the whole  
treasures of wisdom and knowe-  
ledge<sup>s</sup>.

m Reu. 7. 12

n Sal. 5. 1. 1

2. &amp;c.

o Mat. 10. 37

38

Mat. 6. 19.

20. 21

p Rom. 1. 3. 7

&amp;c.

q Ephe. 5. 25

26. &amp;c.

Ruel. 21. 9

r Mat. 11. 25.

s Colos. 3. 3

*of the Imitation of Christ.*

O how iocund are the saints now  
before the face of the most holy, who  
is the cause and spring of their bles-  
sednes!

For there he speaketh vnto them  
not in parables, but plainly of the  
Father.

Ioh. 16. 25.

Hee is their booke, euen the worde  
which in the beginning was with god  
& teaching all things, and performing u Ioh. 1. 1  
all things, so that they want nothing  
in glorie.

O blessed, and euerlasting glorie,  
not of small remembrance, but all  
happie n God h's presence!

There is also the most glorious  
Mother of our Sauour, and constant  
virgine Marie, bewtifying the whole  
celestiall Court with her comlinesse  
and bewtie, compassed and accom-  
panied with troupes of virgins, as  
with sweete Roses and Lillies of the  
vallies.

There be the angels and archan- x Gen. 49. 10  
gels, placed in order, who most cheer- Num. 24. 17  
fullie sound forth the praises of God. Dan 9. 24  
35

Isai. 7. 14

There bee the Patriarches, and Iere. 31. 22,  
Prophets, euen they which beeing p. al. 13 2. 11  
filled long ago with the holy Ghost, Hag. 1. 8, 10  
did foretell of Christ his comming,

I 4

whom

*The fourth booke*

whome now they both knowe, and  
euermore confesse to be their Lord  
and Sauior, the king of kings ⁊, and  
perfect God.

y Reu 7.

14.

Reue. 19.

16.

There they behold eie to eie their  
Redeemer, whome long they looked  
for, and for whose comming they  
onged.

There be the Lords Apostles, and  
disciples, those most reuerend and re-  
nowned Fathers, which were filled  
with holinesse and grace, and laide a  
strong foundation of the Catholike  
faith.

There especially shineth that re-  
uerend man Iohn, which baptized our  
Sauior Christ ⁊, and was a speciall  
friend ⁊ of my Spouse.

10.

There is Peter, and Paule, & An-  
drew, and Philip, and Thomas, and  
James, and Iohn, and all the other A-  
postles and Euangelists, pillars of the  
Church.

To keepe the faith, and to followe  
the example of these men, is the rea-  
die way to euerlasting life.

Moreover, there bee the valiant  
Martyrs enriched with their proper  
blood, and euerlastingly blessed with  
Christ, whose bodies though they  
were most cruellie slain: yet could  
not



*of the Imitation of Christ.*

not their soules by anie torments  
be seuered from Christ.

Also, there bee the noble Confes-  
sors, which contemned this present  
life, that they might be in heauen.

There bee the great and glorious  
Doctors, that were so carried aloft in  
contemplation, of which many haue  
left a lively image of holines in their  
writings:

There be yong men and maidens,  
olde men and children praising the  
name of the Lord continuallie, and  
ascribing the goodnes which they had  
at any time vnto his mercie.

There they are I say, alway grate-  
full, alway zealous, alway iocund,  
alway religious, neuer loathing, but  
euer louing the Lord.

Oh, how glorious is this king-  
dome, where all the Saints doe  
raigne with Christ, arraied with the  
first roabe<sup>b</sup>, and be without care of  
the other!

<sup>b</sup>Reue. 6. 11

Reuel. 7. 13.

There they followe the Lambe  
wheresoeuer he goeth<sup>c</sup>, for they  
cannot part; but reioycing euerla-  
stingly, shall reioice in the Lord.

<sup>c</sup>Reue. 14. 4

O my Soule, muse thou vpon these  
things, and cast thy thoughts vpon  
heauenly matters.

I s

That

*The fourth booke*

That place indeede is an holy place, and God is in the same.

**[Reu. 21.4]** There is surpassing ioy and peace; good things abound, and euils there be none.

Oh, if thou couldest euen a little comprehend the vnspeakeable ioyes of God his Saints, then should you find some comfort:

For in me you shall be sure to find nothing but labour and sorrow, and tentations, and troubles of this world.

**[1 Jan. 1. 17]** Oh that the giuer of supernal light would vouchsafe to inspire some portion of these ioyes into you and not send you backe vnto my new withering foode, but according to the riches of his superabundant mercie, purifie and rid you of all materiall formes, and bring you yea by force into the deepe of his eternall brightness.

Would to GOD you could carry backe from that heavenly sanctuarie, a forme and example of true holiness which you might imitate.

For better, and more true are the examples of celestiall, and strong things, than they which are confirmed by earthlie demonstrations.

There

*of the Imitation of Christ.*

Therefore grant Lord, that I may  
sauer and knowe what the perfect fe-  
licitie of saints is, not so much by  
written bookes thereof, as by the ho-  
lie Ghost, which teacheth of celesti-  
all secrets in such sort, as no sense of  
man is able to reach thereunto.

Grant also that from hencefoorth  
I may lift vp my mind more feruent-  
lie vnto heauenly things; and amidst  
my grieuous troubles, valiantly beare  
the garland of patience, til the debt of  
flesh being paid, I may attain through  
thy mercie vnto this felicitie that I so  
desire.



Chap.

## The fourth booke

## CHAP. 22.

1 A godly meditation, concerning the acceſſe vnto the holy ſcriptures, euen Ieſus Chriſt, the king of angels.

2. Godly petitions for the forgiuenes of ſins.



How art my king,  
O God<sup>a</sup>.

Arise now my soule,  
come, and enter into  
the wonderfull taber-

nacle, euen into the house of God.

For it is meet that omitting other things, thou with all reuerence doo proceede to salute our Lorde Ieſus Chriſt<sup>b</sup>, thy Sauour<sup>c</sup>, and redeemer<sup>d</sup>, which is the head of all principallitie and power<sup>e</sup>; the ioy and crowne of all ſainctes; the assured trust and certaine hope of all the faithfull<sup>f</sup>.

Hee it is which hath made<sup>g</sup>, and redeemed thee<sup>h</sup>; he it is which hath for thy ſake both laboured<sup>i</sup>, ſtrived<sup>k</sup>, and ouercome<sup>l</sup>.

He is thine aduocate<sup>m</sup>, and the propitiation for thy ſins.

He is thy comforter, thy prouider, and thy Lord<sup>n</sup>.

He

a Pſal. 44. 4

b Rom. 1. 3  
7. &c.

c Mat. 1. 21

d Gal. 3. 13

e Reu. 17. 14

f Col. 1. 27

g Pſa. 100. 3.

h Pſa. 119. 73

i 1. pet. 1. 18

k 1. Cor. 15

verse 55.

l 1. Cor. 15

verse 55.

m 1. Ioh. 2. 1

n Reu. 19. 16

1. Ioh. 2. 1

Reu. 19. 16

1. Ioh. 2. 1

Reu. 19. 16

1. Ioh. 2. 1

Reu. 19. 16

1. Ioh. 2. 1

Reu. 19. 16

*of the Imitation of Christ.*

He is thine onely & singular friend  
that feedeth among the lilies °, ° Sal.S.2  
and loueth to rest him vpon thy  
breasts P. 16  
P Sal.S.1

Who euer hath doone the like for  
thee? who euer loued you so intirely?

Come thou vnto him; offer your  
selfe to him; open your whole heart,  
and vnfold euen your hidden secrets  
vnto him.

For no man will better either de-  
clare, or else reueale how you should  
behaue your selfe in this world, in the  
which, things fall out so strangely.

Let your wishes and prayers be di-  
rected vnto him; and in him let all  
your counsailes abide.

Vaine is the hope of man °; but ° ps. 62. 9  
he is the ypholder of peace.

Through him we haue open ac-  
cesse vnto the Father °; and from ° Eph. 2. 18  
him we receiue all goodnes, and  
virtue °. 1. cor. 3. 30

Whether you mourne, or whether  
you reioyce, make continual recourse  
vnto him. 31

He is the glasse of life; the rule  
of righteousness; the light of the  
soule; the loue of shamefastnes; and  
the ioy of a good conscience.

If thou louest him, it will be none  
hard

*The fourth booke*

hard matter for thee to despise the vaine pleasures of this world ; if thou louest him , all sowre things will seeme sweete ; all heauie things will seeme light ; and that which otherwise you should mislike, you will like

e Rom. 8. 35 right well for his sake <sup>r</sup>.

To be brieft, of him, and through him, and for him, are all things <sup>n</sup>.

The principall ende both of all our thoughts , and of all our actions, and of our speech , and of our reading, praying, meditating , and speculation, should be Iesus Christ.

Through him you attaine saluati-  
x Gal. 3. 13 on <sup>r</sup>, and euerlasting life.

For his loue you will neither feare  
y Rom. 8. 35 to die <sup>r</sup> , nor refuse to liue <sup>r</sup> ; because  
x Phil. 1. 23 <sup>36</sup> you are to commit your selfe wholly  
to his trust , and to preferre nothing  
before his loue, and honour.

Wherefore come neere , and giue thanks to thy Redeemer.

S. O most sweete Iesu, aboue all things to be loued, I salute thee most religiously , I commend thee most highly , and I blesse thee powe and euerlastinglye with all thy creatures.

O most renowned Iesu , how  
can I praise thee as I ought ? V When  
shall

*of the Imitation of Christ.*

shall I thanke thee, as I am bound, in that thy mercies are so infinite to me-ward?

Againe, whatsoeuer I giue, it is thy gift, and I receiued it from thee.

a I. CO. 4. 7

But little or nothing it is that I haue: and can I then sacrifice of nothing?

Howbeit, accept I beseech thee, mine humble, base, and vile sacrifice; and let my gifts bee ascribed to thy goodnes.

Let the quires of heauenlic angels attending about thee, sound forth thine infinite praises on my behalfe: also let the soules of the righteous repeate the same.

In the meane while what shall I doo in memorie, and praise of thy most sacred name?

Much I ought to doo, and for manie things I am greatly bound; yet am I not able to performe the least.

And therefore I will read of thee, O my sweete Sauour, I will write of thee; I will sing of thee; I will thinke of thee, I will speake of thee, I will worke for thee, and for thee will I suffer.

In thee will I reioice, thee will I praise,

*The fourth booke*

praise, thee will I magnifie, thee will I glorifie.

As it is meete I will worship thee, because thou art my God<sup>b</sup>, in whom I belecue, whom I doo loue, seeke, and haue alway desired.

<sup>b</sup> Mat 4. 10

Giue mee some good signe, that mine eyes may beholde thy goodly countenance in the heauens.

Humbly I doo throwe downe my selfe at thy feete in heart, earnestly with teares desiring thy fauour, that thou wilt vouchsafe to be good vnto me.

Write my name in the Booke of life; and let that neuer be out-blotted, which thine holie hande hath written.

I, wretch that I am, and far inferior to any of thy saints, yet trusting boldly vpon the more than excellent prerogatiue of thy mercy, beseech thee, that at the leastwise I may bee counted among the basest and worst of thine elect.

I confesse, my life and conuersation is not such, that I dare presume anie thing of my selfe; and therefore all mine hope and comfort is, and resteth in the price of thy precious blood, wherein I doo whollie repose



*of the Imitation of Christ.*

my selfe, and deeme it requisite that I should doe so, together with all which I haue done, offended, deserued and omitted.

And therefore behold, most gracious Iesu, my basenes and humility, consider the affection of mine heart which I beare toward thee, not for my merits, but for thy mercie sake, which vouchsafest to bee loued euen of the vnworthie.

In respect of mine vnworthinesse I am greatlie ashamed to come in thy presence; but I am drawn on and emboldened through your wonderfull goodnesse and humilitie <sup>b</sup>, which hast in perfect good will <sup>c</sup> yeelded not onely to become man <sup>d</sup>, but also to suffer <sup>e</sup>, die, and to bee buried for my sake: and therefore vnto thee doe I make recourse, for I finde no goodnes in my selfe.

<sup>b</sup> Mat. 17. 28  
29.  
<sup>c</sup> Rom. 5. 7  
<sup>d</sup> Iohn. 1. 14  
<sup>e</sup> Mai. 53. 3  
4. &c.

Supplie that for my sake, which of my selfe I cannot performe.

Thou hast giuen me a desire <sup>f</sup> to pray vnto thee, to praise, and to blesse thee: because thou art mine hope, & my portion in the land of the lining <sup>g</sup>. All my desire is to be with thee in the kingdom of heauen; but in as much as my time is not yet come, I will waite vntill

<sup>f</sup> Phil. 1. 13

<sup>g</sup> Psa. 143. 5

*The fourth booke*

vntrill the night approach.

In the meane while this may be my comfort in the place of my pilgrimage, that I am mindfull of thy name and of thine exceeding great loue; & that I behold thee in this life by the eies of my faith.

To liue in this worlde, and yet to repose no trust in thee, O Lord, were a thing intolerable to my soule.

h Luk. 6.

25

I doe not consent to reioyce with the worlde<sup>b</sup>; and, that I may not abide without ioy and comfort, I haue determined to place my ioy in thee<sup>i</sup>.

ii. Cor, 1.

31.

Much and often should I goe astray greatly should I be tossed in cogitations, did I not retaine thee fast in my minde, and thoughts.

And forsomuch as I am vnable to sound the depth of thy diuinitie, I thinke it best for me to turne vnto the deedes and sayings of thine humanitie; because, being in these cogitations, I swaue not altogether from thy diuinitie.

k Iohn. 1

14 Thanks bee to thee, good Iesu, sweete and louely Iesu, for vouchsa-

Mat. 1. 23.

sing to become my brother, to take my flesh and bones vpon thee<sup>k</sup>.

Thanks I say to thee for entering

*of the Imitation of Christ.*

ring into the wombe of good Marie  
thy mother, of whose maidenly flesh  
thou tookest the holy mebers of thy  
bodie, which thou diddest vnite to  
to thy diuine nature.

CHAP. 23.

A godly prayer, and commen-  
dation of our Sauiour  
Christ.



Notwithstanding I  
am wicked, & guil-  
tie of manitolde  
sinnes; yet haue I  
great hope of sal-  
uation, because of  
thy suffering, and  
merits: wherof as I haue a good mind  
to consider, so graunt, O my Lord  
Christ, that I may with good leaue so  
doe.

For who am I to approch nigh vn-  
thee, vnlesse I haue licence?

I know mine vnworthiness to ap-  
peare in his presence, whome the va-  
rie angels doe worship with great re-  
uerence, saying:

Who is this that commeth out of  
the wilderness of this world, so aboun-  
ding in pleasure?

There-

*The fourth booke*

a Eccles. 10  
ve se. 9

Therefore, O most blessed Saviour, I am farre vnmette to thinke of thy glorie and honour, of thy beawty and magnificence; because I am earth and ashes<sup>a</sup>, yea more base am I than earth and ashes, because I am sinfull, & prone vnto all wickednes.

b Mat. 28. 8  
Hebr. 2. 8

But thou beeing made hier then heauen, hast the whole worlde vnder thy feere<sup>b</sup>, and art worthy to be praised and honored for euer more.

Howbeit of thine vnspeakeable goodnesse, which passeth all vnderstanding, I am drawen in affection vnto thee, because thou art the comfort of the comfortlesse, & vset most willingly to helpe most miserable sinners.

I acknowledge how I am not onely destitute of all comfort, especially of thy fauour; but also verie vnable to do good vnto my selfe.

But, mercifull Iesus, wouldest thou vouchsafe to consider my basenesse, then should I both be ayded and comforted most plentifully in this my trouble.

Therefore I see well, whensoever I am compassed about with affliction and tentation, I am straight waie

and

*of the Imitation of Christ.*

and without feare to flie vnto thee?  
for where mercie is most readie, there  
grace is in greatest plentie.

And when I haue a good minde to  
consider of thy most glorious estate,  
and to commend thee in moste ho-  
nourable maner, I must come forth  
with a much purer affection, and may  
not goe forward without the con-  
duction of Gods heauenlie light.

Assuredly hee shall haue no glorie,  
but shame, that presumeth without  
all reuerence to approche vnto thy  
gate.

And he which commeth thereinto  
must proceede with all reuerence and  
humilitie, ioyned with good hope,  
that he may finde grace to be admit-  
ted.

Wherefore both humblie, and re-  
uerentlie, and deuoutly, and boldly I  
go to thee-ward.

Let the goodlie louer of thy name  
listen then what I say.

The heauen reioyceth, the earth  
wondereth, when by faith mine heart  
saith; Christ is my saviour.

Sathan flyeth, hell trembleth, when  
my conscience cryeth, Christ is my  
Saviour.

The

*The fourth booke*

The world waxeth vile, and the flesh humble, when as a christ an doth say, Christ is my Sauiour.

Sorrow departeth, newe comfort approacheth, when my minde pronounceth, Christ is my Sauiour.

Slouthfulnes vanisheth, mine hart through loue fainteth, when zealouslie I can say, Christ is my Sauiour.

Zeale encreaseth, compunction ariseth, hope groweth, comfort waxeth strong, when my soule soundeth, Christ is my Sauiour.

Mine heart is iocund, mine affection becommeth sounde, when in truth I doe say, Christ is my Sauiour.

For such is the force of these words vttered of a faithfull soule, that no man is able to expresse the same in wordes, but still it resteth more hie and excellent, than may bee reached vnto by the wit of man.

Which maketh me once againe most humble to bowe my knees vnto thee, O blessed Sauiour, and still I say, O Christ my Sauiour.

O most gracious Iesu receiue my prayer, and mee with it, that I may finde some-what that may like thee well, and embolden mee, and kindle my

*of the Imitation of Christ.*

my zeale, and keepe mee euermore  
in continuall praising of thine holie  
name.

Oh that for the satisfying my de-  
sire to praise, and to pray vnto thee  
from the verie bottome of mine hart,  
both all my members were forthwith  
conuerted into tongues, and those  
tongs into fierie voyces, that I might  
finde away to glorifie thee, my Sau-  
our, worlde without ende!

Oh that for all my sins wherwith  
I haue deserued thine indignation,  
offended grieuoussliethy father, and  
dishonored thee with all the hoste of  
heauen, I might once so thoroughly be  
waile, and repent, that I might here-  
after take a newe trade of life to thy  
glorie, and the comfort of my soule.

Oh that thou wouldest assist mee  
in well dooing, seeing my life fraile &  
I all subiect to offending!

Oh pardon and forgiue all my sins,  
either wilfullie or negligently com-  
mitted, all my vaine thoughts, my  
vngodly speeches, my abhorrible  
deedes!

O most gracious Iesu, I say, doe  
thou both defend mee from dooing  
an

*The fourth booke*

any wickednes hereafter, and forgive, I pray thee, all my sinnes forepast: so shall I be both the more devout, the more zealous, and the more carefull in saying, thou Christ art my Sauior both in mine heart, and with my mouth, in companie, and in my chamber, and in the garden, and in the field, and in all places wheresoeuer I shall be.

And now, what more shall I aske of thee, O Christ my Sauior?

What is better, or more profitable, or more necessarie, especially for me a great sinner, than to finde fauour in thy sight, O Christ my Sauior?

And therefore it is that I haue desired, and still doe craue, euen that by thine intercession and meanes, I may haue the grace of GOD thy Father, who, as both thy selfe hast laide, and the Apostle doth witness, hast all power giuen thee both in heauen and earth.

cMat. 28.

8.

There is no prayer more welcom to thee, than this is, nor anie thing more necessarie for mee, than the grace and fauour of God.

If I haue the grace of God, whatsoever else I doe want, I am rich enough.

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*of the Imitation of Christ.*

enough.

For what is all my endeououring if I lacke that? Again, what can I not doo, if I be assisted and holpen thereby?

I see that manie and diuers are my wicked affections; but yet against all passions the grace of God is a most effectuell medicine; & if once it come, it will mitigate them all.

I do also stand in neede of spirituall wisdom and knowledge; but the grace of God is a most excellent teacher, & instructor of heavenly knowledge, and is able euen suddenly to instruct me in whatsoener things are necessary vnto saluation.

For to require more than is necessary, or to desire to vnderstand more than is lawfull to be knowen, is against the will of God, whose pleasure is that we shoul'd be humbled vnder his hand, and contented with his grace.

Wherefore obtaine this grace for me, O Christ, which is so noble and precious, that indeede I ought neither to desire or craue any other thing than grace for grace.

## The fourth booke

## Chap. 24.

A praier for comfort vnto  
Iesus Christ.

SPG. 45. 2



Race is poured into  
thy lips <sup>2</sup>.

Oh my Lord, I  
beseech thee, at  
length now vouch-  
safe to speake vnto  
me, O Christ.

b Iohn. 1. 16

Open thy mouth in thine owne  
name, who art full of all spirituall  
graces <sup>b</sup>.

L. I am the fountaine of mercie ; ful  
of loue and sweetnes.

I am the Ladder for sinners ; the  
hope and pardon of the guiltie.

I am the comfort of the sorrowful,  
and the speciaill ioy of all saines.

Come vnto me so manie as loue  
me, and fill your selues at the breasts  
of my comfort ; because I am good  
and mercifu'l to all which crie vnto  
mee.

Come vnto me both righteous and  
sinners, I will sue vnto the Father for  
you ; I will intreate him to be good  
vnto you, and to fill you with the holy  
Ghost.

*of the Imitation of Christ.*

I call euerie one, I looke for all,  
I desire to haue all to come vnto mee;  
I despise no sinner, but with the an-  
gels in heauen I reioice exceedingly  
ouer that sinner which repenteth <sup>c</sup>, <sup>cLuk. 15. 10</sup>  
and so cometh into the fauour of  
God: for no one drop of my blood  
which I shed for the worlde, is in  
vaine.

Therefore come vnto mee, yee  
sonnes of men, consider and behold  
my zeale for you vnto God my Fa-  
ther.

Lo, I haue taken his wrath vpon  
my selfe, I haue borne his displea-  
sure <sup>d</sup>, yea. and continuallie doe I <sup>d Isa. 53. 1. 2.</sup>  
make supplication for you vnto him <sup>&c.</sup>  
<sup>e</sup>, whome you knowe right well you <sup>c I. Ioh. 1. 2</sup>  
haue greiuously offended.

Turne then, and approche, repent,  
and of my worde you shall haue par-  
don.

For lo, I stand betweene heauen  
and earth. betweene God and sin-  
ners; and that this world perish not,  
I obtaine through my prayers.

Wherefore abuse not my goodnes  
and mercie; but beware of offending,  
least when you little thinke thereof <sup>f</sup>, <sup>f Mat. 24. 44</sup>  
indignation bee powred vpon you, <sup>g Rom. 2</sup>  
and intolerable vengeance <sup>h</sup>.

*The fourth booke*

I doe forewarne you as children, I  
beseech you as friends, bee you per-  
fect as your heauenlie Father is per-  
fect <sup>h</sup> *Mat. 5. 48,*

Forget not mee, who haue beene,  
and am, and will be mindfull of you.

For I doe both pittie such as are in  
miserie, and I doe entreate for those  
<sup>1. Ioh. 2. 1, 2</sup> which crie vnto me <sup>i</sup>.

S. O gracious speech, and full of all  
comfort!

O heauenlie voice, sweetlie drop-  
ping from heauen to the cōforting of  
sinners, & reioycing of the righteous.

O celestiaall musicke, how sweetely  
dooest thou resounde in a desperate  
conscience!

Whence is it that the Sauour of  
mankind will thus talke with me?

Blessed art thou, O Christ, and  
blessed are the words of thy mouth.  
For honie is vnder thy tongue, and  
the sauor of thy speech excelleth all  
sweetnes.

My soule was mollified, so soone  
as thou spakest, O Christ.

Behold, no sooner did thy voyce  
sounded in mine eares, but my soule  
within did spring for ioy.

For my spirit reuiued within me;  
and all mine entrailes were filled  
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*of the Imitation of Christ.*

with newe comfort; because good & ioyfull things are tolde mee this day by you.

I was dolefull, but now I am iocund because of your wordes. For your voice is sweete in mine eares.

I was grieved and desolate; but now I am reuiued, and made merrie. For thou hast sent thine hand from on hie, and touched mee, whereby of weake I am become strong.

Scarfe could I speake: but now I haue a good minde to sing, and to praise thee highlie.

I was loth to liue, and now I am willing to die, because I haue thee, Christ, for mine aduocate, with the Father, to whose mercie I commend my selfe, euen from this time for euer and euer.

For since first you began to speake vnto the heart of the desolate Orphane, I haue beene changed into a better state, and greatlie comforted in my minde.

I was almost at the doore of desperation, but thy comfort came, & lifted me vp with these wordes.

L. What is the matter Son? and who are they which would hurt thee?

Feare not, I will see vnto thee my

K 3

sonne.

*The fourth booke*

sonne.

k Reue. i. 4

I doe liue with God my Father<sup>v</sup>,  
and I sit at his right hand, beeing a  
faithfull hie Priest, and an intercessor  
for thy sinnes<sup>l</sup>.

1 I. Ioh. 2. 1

In me thou shouldest repose thy  
trust, because I doe both giue life<sup>m</sup>,  
and destroy death<sup>n</sup>.

m Ioh. i. 1.

I was incarnate of a virgine in  
time<sup>o</sup>, but of my Father begotten  
before all times<sup>p</sup>, and when the ful-  
nes of time came I suffered for mans  
saluation<sup>q</sup>.

25

n I. Cor.

15. 55

o Mat. i. 18

19 &amp;c.

p Psa 27.

Heb 1. 5

q Gal. 44.

Lo, I am the hope and comfort of  
the godlie, and by mee is faith and  
victorie attained<sup>r</sup>.

5

r I. Cor.

15. 57.

And therefore let neither me, nor  
these things be out of thy minde, and  
thou wilt not feare any dartes of Sa-  
tan.

S. Oh happie houre! O blessed state,  
that my Lord and Saviour wil vouch-  
safe to comfort on this wise my tro-  
bled hart!

Oh that I might still heare thy  
so comfortable wordes! for greatly  
doe they inflame, and moue mee,  
and touch mee euen at the verie  
heart.

O blessed Christ, thou neuer cea-  
sest to send forth the sweete milk of  
heauen-

*of the Imitation of Christ.*

heauenlie consolation!

For by reason of the abundance of thy grace, thou canst not denie fauor to such as craue the same at thine hands; yet often thou shewest much mercie euen to the verie sinner <sup>f</sup> *Mat. 5, 45*

O Christ, thou excellest in pittifulnes, in mercie, and in louing!

O Sauour, to whom none is to be compared, thou art aboue all to bee leued, and to be worshipped.

O Sonne of God, by whom we are *Gal. 4, 6, 7* also the sonnes of God <sup>t</sup>, & of whom wee are called Christians <sup>a</sup>, thou art *u Act. 17, 26* of all good men to be serued most religiouslie, and aboue all <sup>x</sup> *Mar. 4, 10.*

O friend of all friends <sup>y</sup>, King of *1. Ioh. 3, 16* heauen & earth <sup>z</sup>, Lord of Angels <sup>a</sup>, &c. *Reu. 1, 5, 6* *a Feb. 1, 6, 7* conquerer of diuels <sup>b</sup>, draw me after thee, least I fall, and so rest vnder the *Mark. 1, 13* *b Mar. 4, 10* heauie burden of sin. <sup>11,</sup>

Poure out thy grace, send me thy *Mark. 5, 7, 8* comfortable dew from aboue, that <sup>9, &c.</sup> *ci. Pet. 3, 24* truly I may perceiue, how thou art <sup>15</sup> the procurer, and the open fountaine of all mercie <sup>c</sup>.

L. I am indeed the spring of holie loue, and of chaste and religious fear, of godly conference, and of sweete consolation.

Therefore when you doe heare

*The fourth booke*

my name, reioice with your whole heart, and magnifie the goodnes of your God.

In honouring me, you honour the Father, which is God as I am <sup>d</sup>. For I am Iesus the Sonne of God <sup>e</sup>, and this name shall I haue while the world endureth <sup>f</sup>.

But what is Iesus? euen the Sonne of the liuing God <sup>g</sup>; the Sauour of the world <sup>h</sup>; the King of heauen and earth <sup>i</sup>; the Lord of Angels <sup>k</sup>; the redeemer of the faithfull <sup>l</sup>; & the iudge of quick and dead <sup>m</sup>.

And what is Iesus? the hope of the godly; the comfort of the desolate; the peace of the meeke; the riches of the poore; the glorie of the humble; the strength of the weake; the waie of such as wander; the light of such as see not; the staff of such as walk not; the oyle of such as feelee not; the stay of the oppressed; the helpe of the troubled; and the singular refuge of all good men <sup>n</sup>.

Blesse the Sonne with the Father, and so God will blesse you.

Giue honour also and glorie to the Father, whensoever you praise mee.

His glorie is my ioy; & my praise, is his worship.

Place



*of the Imitation of Christ.*

Place me and the Father as a seale  
vpon thine heart, and as a token vpon  
thine arme.

Therefore sit you, or stand you, or  
pray, or reade, or wright, or worke  
you, let my name Iesus and God be  
often reuerently in your mouth, but  
continually in your heart.

S. O grant it may be so good Iesus;  
and let all people, tribes and toongs,  
serue thee, and let all creatures bow  
at thy presence.

Let heauen say, Raigne thou Iesus;  
let the earth make answer, yea for  
euer and euer let him raigne.

Yea let all Saints confesse thy glo-  
rious Name, and all good people re-  
ioice before the Father, and thee his  
lambe, and our Lord Iesus Christ  
Amen.

of Ioh. 1. 29  
Ro. 1 3. 7



Chap.

K 5

## The fourth booke

## Chap. 25.

That for God his benefits we are  
to thanke him.

a psa. 72. 19  
b loh. 20. 17



Blessed bee the glorious  
Name of the Lord for e-  
uermore <sup>3</sup>.

c 1. co. 10. 31

O Lord my God,  
let all my doings, all  
my reading, all my wrighting, my  
thoughts, wordes, and vnderstan-  
thing, tend vnto the aduancement of  
thine honor <sup>c</sup>.

Yea, let me both begin my busines  
in thy Name, and goe forward in thy  
feare, and finish it with thy blessing.

That which thou hast giuen, that  
receiue againe; and from whence  
the streames doo flowe, thither let  
them returne.

It neuer goeth better with mee,  
neither dooth it relish better to my  
soule, then when vnfaignedly I dooe  
ascribe all to thee, whatsoeuer I haue  
either doon, or thought as I should.

My desire is to render thankes,  
which I then doo as I ought, when  
for that I haue receiued, and thou  
hast giuen, I ascribe all praise to thee,  
and

*of the Imitation of Christ.*  
and nothing to my selfe.

For what can I, a wicked and vnprofitable seruant, render vnto thee my God? Alas, all that I can do, yea, if I should doo all which thou commandest to bee doone, it is to none effect <sup>a</sup>.

<sup>d</sup> Lu. 17. 10

So that I am brought vnto nothing, and right y humbled. And indeede it is very well that I am so brought downe <sup>e</sup>, that thou alone maiest bee iustified <sup>f</sup>, and haue the praise of all, and that vile dust <sup>g</sup> may at no time glorie in it selfe.

<sup>e</sup> ps. 119. 71

<sup>f</sup> psal. 51. 4

<sup>g</sup> Eccle. 10

verse 9

Howbeit, I mind not to surceasse, but will extoll thee both with heart and mouth. For albe I discharge not my dutie therein as I ought: yet ought I to speake of thy goodnes, and not be silent.

O my God, thou art my glorie; my praise shall alwaies be of thee <sup>h</sup>.

<sup>h</sup> psal. 71. 6

He that would but a little consider of thy glorie, and knowe what it is to glorie in the Lord <sup>i</sup>; how would hee despise all outward glorie!

<sup>i</sup> Jer. 9. 24

He that would, euen but a little, taste of thy sweetnes; how quicklie would he loath, as most bitter, the pleasure of this world!

He which would receiue euen but

a

*The fourth booke*

a small sparkle of loue into his breast, howe would hee burne in affection! For full gladly would hee contemne all thinges to haue thy friendship: and would count it all sweete and easie to bee borne, whatsoeuer he should do, or suffer for thy loue sake \*.

k Rom, 8.35

Hee that would consider in his minde thy goodnes to man-warde; how would hee reioyce, and run after thee! He would seeke nothing so charitie, he would keepe nothing so warilie, he would pursue nothing so egerlie, as to serue thee. For in louing, he would feelee no burden<sup>1</sup>, because loue would beare all burdens.

sa. 8.6.7

So then they which complaine of the burden, doo plainly declare how they haue little true loue in them.

To serue of loue, is of all others the greatest pleasure, and comfort in labour.

True loue dooth neither respect commoditie, nor feare damage, but in all things seeketh that which maye please thee.

Oh Christ, how sweete is thy loue, how well doth it sound, how sweetlie dooth it enter, how stronglie dooth it binde!

Oh

*of the Imitation of Christ.*

Oh that it would fast binde me  
to thy continuall seruice! oh that it  
would whollie take me, and whollie  
subdue me, and whollie and altoges  
ther make me to be thine!

For then, and not before am I free,  
when I am taken of thy loue, and vt  
terlie depriued from all that mine is.

O my Lord, I am thy seruant<sup>m</sup>, yea <sup>m Ps. 143. 2</sup>  
thy seruant am I, because thou hast  
redeemed me<sup>n</sup>.

<sup>n 1. Co. 6. 20</sup>

I am thy seruant with a very good  
will, and am not ashamed to be pro  
perlie thine.

<sup>1. Cor. 7. 23</sup>

<sup>1. Peter. 1. 19</sup>

I wish not to be mine owne man  
again: and therefore, Lord, helpe  
mee, that I may be freed from that  
which naturallie is mine.

Oh blowe and kindle, and inflame  
the fire of my zeale, so shall mine  
heart boile, and become pure, cleare,  
& pleasant: for thy loue expelleth vice,  
and consumeth sin.

Lay thou fast hold vpon the band  
of loue, and I shall stand and continue  
in thy seruice.

Full well I wot, no good can my ser  
uice doo you, Lord; but all the be  
nefit redoundeth to my selfe, if I do  
that which I know is acceptable in thy  
sight.

Would

*The fourth booke*

Would I did, and hid not, that I  
reuealed, & concealed not thy works,  
Lord!

When shall I be able worthily to  
consider the manifold benefits con-  
ferred vpon me of God!

Mercifully hast thou dealt with thy  
thy seruant O Lord; but alack, I ne-  
uer thanked thee for the same, as  
thou deseruedst.

And therefore am I punished, and  
pinched at the very heart, euen be-  
cause I am vnable to answer thy be-  
nefits so great and so manifold.

Oh that I could euen but once  
woorthily, and thoroughly thanke  
thee for all these things!

But what may proceede from him,  
in whome nothing is? An emptie  
vessell, can minister no drinke.

What then shal I doo? Something  
I must giue. For it is not lawfull to  
come before GOD with an emptie  
hand. Because the Lorde abhorrieth  
the vngratefull man.

°Lm. 17. 17

Oh, that I could finde something  
in this world to giue you, that might  
be acceptable in your sight!

Oh my Lord, whome in heart I  
loue, what would you that I should  
giue you.

As

*of the Imitation of Christ.*

As for any good thing of mine  
you neede it not P. And why then  
exact you a gift of mine hands ? For  
riches, none is comparable to you,  
and yet require you somewhat of  
me ?

Ep. 50. 12

L. That which I demaund is euen  
your selfe whollie. For so it is expe-  
dient, if you would purchase my fa-  
uour.

I will giue grace to you, and you  
shall shewe grace to mee ; and so  
loue shall be continued betweene  
vs.

Giue me your selfe, and you haue  
giuen euen all.

S. O good Iesus, the fountaine of al  
goodnes, the fountaine of life, the  
fountaine of grace, the fountaine of  
sweetnes, the verie fountaine of aye  
lasting wisedome, powre vpon mee  
enen at this instant. I beleeche thee,  
the gift of thy celestiall grace, and  
teach me to be gratefull, and to giue  
my selfe before all thinges whollie  
vnto you; for this is the deereſt thing  
that I can render.

This I doo knowe, and acknow-  
ledge. Therefore receiue mee: lo, I  
am whollie thine, and all that mine is,  
is thine.

Onelie

*The fourth booke*

Onelie one thing there is which I cannot giue; and that is my sinne, which is mine indeede properlie, and therefore not to be imputed vnto thee.

Sin mine is; and all defaultes within me are to be ascribed to me onely; but glorie, and for all thy benefites thanks be vnto thee.

But now in calling thy benefits into mind, of many I gather only a few, and those which doo most of all moue me, & appeare in my mind. For neither wil the time suffer to recite, neither can my thoughts comprehend

q 1. Cor. 13.9 them all.

Because for number they are infinite, for greatnes incomprehensible, and inestimable for goodnes. For bought they cannot bee, because they are freelie giuen. And therefore onelie thanks bee required for them, otherwise all shall be taken away, as from that vngratefull one.

r Mat. 10.8  
James, 1.17  
f Mat. 25.28  
t Mat. 4.10  
u Iohn. 1.1

First therefore and afore all things,  
Colof. 1.15 I thank thee, O Lord my God, creator of all things, for making mee  
16 a man, after thine image and similitude, and for placing mee ouer the  
17 workes of thine hands.

x Gen. 1.27  
Psa. 119.73  
y Psalm 8.6  
7. &c.

This is the great and first benefit bestowed



*of the Imitation of Christ.*

bestowed vpon mee, and that of thy  
meere goodnes.

For I made not my selfe, but thine  
hands did fashion me <sup>z</sup>, they brought  
me into this worlde through my pa-  
rents <sup>z</sup>, whome thy will was, should  
serue thee herein.

z ps. 100.3

ap. 139.13

15, &c.

And lo, I am better than other cre-  
atures, exalted aboue the beastes of  
the field, and birds of the aire <sup>b</sup>; in  
that I am fashioned after thine image  
<sup>c</sup>, indued with eternall wisdom, and  
naturally participate of the light vn-  
create, and of the vnchangeable  
truth.

b Ge. 1.28

Wild. 9.2,

c 1. Cor. 11.

7

Wherefore for my beeing, liuing,  
and vnderstanding, I giue thee euer-  
lasting praise, wishing and desiring  
herewithall, that all creatures both in  
heauen and earth, may euerlastingly  
commend thy glorious and most ex-  
cellent name.

I blesse thee, O Father, Lord of  
heauen and earth <sup>d</sup>, who of nothing  
through thy onely begotten Sonne  
Jesus Christ in the holic Ghost, hast  
created all things <sup>e</sup>.

d ps 97.1

psa. 99.1

e Ioh. 1.1.

Yea all things thou hast made, not of  
necessitie compelled, but of pure and  
speciall loue moued thereunto, therby  
to shewe thy power vnto the sons of  
men,

2.3.

Heb. 1.2

*The fourth booke*

¶ Ps. 145. 4 men<sup>r</sup>; and by thine inuisible and  
coeternall wiledome with thee, thou  
hast most perfectlie disposed this vi-  
sible world &.

g Wisd. 9. 1

h Mat. 28. 18

i Gen. 1. 28,

Let all thy creatures subiect in all  
things to thee<sup>b</sup>, and ordeined for the  
vse of man<sup>i</sup>, blesse thee.

For at thy commandement both  
raine falleth from heauen, and fruit  
springeth from the earth.

The sunne shineth brightly in the  
day time, the starres giue light by  
course in the night.

The fountaines spring, the riuers  
flowe, and fishes of diuerse kinds do  
swim :

The birds not onely flie, but sing  
also; and the goates, the colts, and  
hartes, doe spring vpon the moun-  
taines.

The sheepe and other cattell, doe  
ioy in good pasture, and diuerse o-  
ther liuing creatures doe run about  
the groauers.

The ground waxeth greene, the  
fields prosper, and trees of the wood  
doe yeeld both boughes and fruit.

O Lord, which onely doost won-  
derous things<sup>k</sup>, euen al these are thy  
workes.

¶ Ps. 72. 18

Another benefit which thou hast  
bestowed

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For

my life

*of the Imitation of Christ.*

bestowed vpon mee, is the myserie  
of incarnation<sup>1</sup>, the worke of my 1.Tim. 3.16  
redemption, the price of our salua-  
tion, euen the fruit of thy passion and  
death.

O greates worke of mercie! Oh  
worke of most excellent leue<sup>m</sup>, mRom. 5. 8,  
most abiect humilitie<sup>n</sup>, of most rare nphil. 2. 5,  
patience<sup>o</sup>! &c.

No man could merit, nor Angell o 1.Pet. 2. 21  
procure this thing. 22. &c.

The Prophets haue wondered at  
it; the Apostles haue seene & taught  
it; the faithfull haue embraced it; &  
the elect speciallie doe loue, & call  
it into minde.

The due consideration of this be-  
nefit stirreth vp good desires; infla-  
meth the heart; nourisheth deuotion;  
inlighteneth the minde; purgeth the  
affection; draweth on to heauen-  
ward; withdraweth from the world;  
drineth vnto God; and visiteth the  
soule with Christ.

This benefite farre excelleth the a-  
boue mentioned: yet there is one  
which gaue each, and hath bestowed  
both of them vpon vs, euen our Lord  
Iesus Christ.

For what the better had I bin for  
my life, if I had not bin redeemed  
with

*The fourth booke*

p Gala. 3, 13 with the precious bloud of my Saviour Christ r?

q Psal. 130, 7 Therefore the grace and mercie of God grewe vpon me, and plentiful redemption was made: for the corrupted nature of man without the aid of God his maker, could neuer haue bene repaired.

r 2. Cor. 1, 3 O Father of mercies, and God of all comfort, thou to redeeme thy damned seruant, hast giuen thine only Sonne to the death.

u 1. Tim. 3, 16 O wonderfull kindnes of thine to vs-ward, vnto which, neither the wit of man, nor the vnderstanding of Angels can attaine! But alone, sweete Christ, thou art the beginning and the ende of our saluation, & alone couldest helpe the miserable, & damned, thou alone art priue to the same.

x Phil. 2, 5, 6 For thou diddest vouchsafe to appeare vnto the world in the likenes of a most vile seruant; and for mortall wormes y euen of meere pittie receiuedst with a willing minde the iudgement of a cruell death.

a Wis. 7, 26 O good Iesus, thou which art the fountaine of mercie, the light of aye lasting glorie, the pure glasse (without spot) of God his maiestie, kindle mine

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*of the Imitation of Christ.*

mine heart with the meditation of this vnspokeable benefit, bestowed vpon me, and vpon all mankind.

bRom. 5. 15  
16. &c.

But this, as was the former, is generall, sufficient to saue all, but not effectually in all, by reason of the incredulitie, and malice of manie: howbeit it saueh, and is profitable to all the elect, for whose sake all things were created, and be, as I may say, created againe, through thee my Sauour.

O good Iesus, how manifold are thy benefites brought vnto vs by thine humanitie!

Thou becamest our brother, and flesh of our flesh, that we might be counted the children of God, and haue access vnto the Father, thorough thee, the fire of whose displeasure none could quench, but thou alone of whome himselfe did say: *This is my beloued Sonne, in whom I am well pleased.*

cIohn. 1. 14  
dGal. 4. 6. 7

e 1. Ioh. 2. 1.  
2.

fMat. 3. 17:  
Mat. 17. 5

Happie is the soule, which earnestly recordeth, and hartlie loueth, and worthily extolleth the Sacraments of our redemption; and for them thinketh thee; and finally dependeth vpon thy counsaile, more than vpon her owne sense.

For none is meete to search out, no wife.

*The fourth booke*

wisdom can reach into this mysterie; onely it is the strength of beleefe, and the purenes of the heart lightened from aboue & that beholdeth the same.

g Mt. 5. 8

Oh, blessed is hee that is worthis to receiue that by grace, which the wise of the worlde could not vnderstand by nature <sup>h</sup>!

h Mat. 11. 25

O sweete Iesu, the wisdom of the Father, make mee in the light of faith to knowe this great and woonderfull myserie of thine incarnati-

i 1. Tim. 3. 16

on <sup>i</sup>, for therein the sweetnesse of our whole saluation lyeth, and thereby the rarest friendship that euer

k 1. Io. 3. 16

was seene appeareth <sup>k</sup>, and through it the vnsearchable fulnesse of thy wisdom glittereth most gloriouslie.

Rem. 5. 8.

Rom. 8. 32

O let thy seruant growe on still in godlines, in the studie of well doing, and more and more in his memorable secret of thine incarnation, make mee acquainted with the myserie of thine holy passion, and I draw mee whollie into the meditation of thy worke. <sup>l</sup>

The declaration of this loue, and humilitie, is a woonderfull deep, and a certaine celestiall sea, which may

not

*of the Imitation of Christ.*

not be swoom ouer, wherein do swim  
too and fro the spirituall fishes both  
small and great, which thou hast ta-  
ken within the net of faith.

Wherefore let this thy so great  
loue and sweetnes, thine so great  
humilitie and kindnes abide still in  
my remembrance; let it alwaie re-  
maine in euerie sacrifice of prayer  
that I am to make; and in all mine  
holie exercises let there bee some-  
what, as pleasant frankincense, and  
delightfull spices, for a sweete smel-  
ling sauer to be offered vnto God the  
Father, concerning the mysterie of  
thine incarnation and passion.

Let nowe then such as thou hast  
redeemed, I say, whom thou hast  
redeemed out of the hande of the e-  
nemie<sup>1</sup>, sing out with mee the song <sup>1 Luke. 1. 74</sup>  
of thine heauenlie praise, and of in-  
warde ioy together with thanksgi-  
uing.

Yea, let all the Angels standing a-  
bout thy throne, fall vppon their fa-  
ces, and worship the Lambe of God,  
who hath taken away the sins of the  
world<sup>m</sup>, saying<sup>n</sup>:

<sup>m</sup> Ioh. 1. 29.  
<sup>n</sup> Reu. 7. 13

Praise, and glorie, and wisdom,  
and thanks, and honor, and power,  
and might, bee vnto our Lord Iesus  
Christ

*The fourth booke*

Christ for euermore, Amen.

A third benefit not inferior to the former, is the grace of iustification, whereby of thy goodnesse thou hast drawen mee vnto repentance, and amendment of life, forgiving my sins, and giuing me both hope of pardon, and willingnes to doe well, and to serue thee euermore.

This, after Paule duely had considered, he adhorteth his disciples to be both thankfull for so great a benefit, and also mindefull of the heauenlie grace, and to studie to shewe themselves worthy so spirituall a calling:

or. Cor. 1. 26

27.

Brethren, saith he, you see you are called, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called. But God hath chosen the foolish things of the worlde to confound the wise.

These things I consider in my self, who notwithstanding I am contemptible, and vnmeete for this worlde yet by thine holie calling am I saved from the shipwrack of the same, vnto thine holy seruice. And this I ascribe whollie, not vnto any goodnesse of mine, but vnto thy prouidence.

For the which I extoll thy goodnes, and blesse thee, euen I say, for calling

ling



*of the Imitation of Christ.*

ling mee graciouſly, for giuing mee a deſire to pleaſe thee, for pardoning all my ſins; for putting me vnder thy ſweete yoke, ſoftening mine hart with the oyle of thy ſpirit, whome the world neither knoweth, neither ſeeſh nor ſaureth.

O mercifull Ieſu keepe me in this minde, I beſeech thee, encrease thy gifts of grace within mee more and more, ſo long as I remaine in this viſible light.

I perceiue right well this calling of mine is a great benefit, not giuen to all men, but onely to ſuch as God the Father hath ordained thereunto: becauſe it is not in him that willet, nor in him that runneth; but in God that ſheweth mercie, that euery mouth may be ſtopped, and all the worlde culpable before God; & that no fleſh ſhould reioice in thy preſence, nor aſcribe any of their owne vertues, or good works, to themſelues.

For if thou ſhouldeſt deale with me in iuſtice, alas, I were the damned with the curſed ſpirits in hell.

But of thy goodnes, O Lord, thou haſt ſpared mee, and forgien my ſins, whereby I am not as the childe

I I of

*The fourth booke*  
of perdition.

And therefore am I bound to render great thanks vnto thee for so excellent a benefite, & would to God, both in my speech, and in my life, all the daies of my life, I might answere my calling!

But Lord, in steede of all thanks, receive I beseech thee, my poore seruice, whereby I desire, and indeed am bound to serue thee.

Graunt also that the debt of my seruice may proceede from the heart, and finally agree to thy will and honor; and that mine heart bee neuer turned from thy loue, but that both my soule and bodie may alike watch and perseuer day and night in thine holie seruice, ~~even so long as life is~~ within my bodie, and I haue my wit to remember thee; let thy praise be neuer out of my mouth, nor the remembrance of thy manifolde benefits slip out of mine heart.

And if thy seruant shall yet liue many yeeres, either an hundred, or howe many soeuer, graunt that I maie not prooue luke-warme, or abashed at thy seruice, but bee euen so zelous, and so willing to serue thee, as I was at the first heure and day when

*of the Imitation of Christ.*

when mine heart was admonished & confirmed of thee, euen with a pure and whole minde only to follow thee my Lord.

Neither let any infirmitie or aduersitie hinder my purpose; but euen as now I meane, and purpose in the hearing of thee my God: so I beseech thee giue grace, that what now I haue promised, I may performe.

And although through my infirmitie and faults, this my courte shall be broken as there is no man so righteous vpon earth but he sinneth<sup>r</sup>; yet 1. Chron. 6. 36 suffer me not to despaire, and to faint verie vtterly, but put into my minde forthwith to bow the knees of mine heart, and with much sorrowe and teares to offer vnto thee my wofull and wounded conscience to bee healed with the salue of thy mercie, and that my purpose may bee bound more surely than euer it was.

Let mee neuer repent mee of this couenant, but still giue thanks that I haue founde such fauour in thine eies as to bee accepted into thine holie warfare.

Thou canst, O almightie<sup>r</sup>, and all Eze 10. 5  
2. Cor. 6. 18

I am mercifull

*The fourth booke*

in wis. 12. 20 mercifull God<sup>u</sup>, who haste of no-  
 2. Cor. 1. 3 thing created mee<sup>x</sup>, and foresceest  
 x Gen. 1. 26 the fall, and infirmitie of man; thou  
 Psal. 100. 3 art able, I say, and that thou wilt I  
 beseech thee, forgiue the sinnes which  
 I haue committed; supplie what I  
 haue omitted; restore what I haue  
 lost, heale what is sicke; cleanse what  
 is vnclane; lighten what is darke;  
 assuage that which swelleth; inflame  
 what is quenched; repaire that is  
 broken; recouer that is neglected;  
 amende what is awrie; make plaine  
 what is rugged; restraine what is cu-  
 rious; call home that which wand-  
 dereth; place what is out of order;  
 yea, and alter the whole state of  
 my minde, that nothing be wanting  
 to my former purpose, and let all  
 occasion of euill, worke for the best  
 vnto mee, I most humblie desire  
 thee.

This chaunge, is made by the  
 right hand of God; this is God his  
 visitation; this is the manifold  
 conference of the diuine good-  
 nesse.

In steade of all thanks, accept  
 the deuoute seruice of thine holie  
 Church where-so-euer, with the  
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*of the Imitation of Christ.*

sweete praises of the whole court of heauen.

And let all the Saintes from the beginning of the world, which thorough thy grace haue bin enlightened and called, yea and all the faithfull and Christian people which either bee in the world, or haue beene afore vs, or shall liue hereafter, let them I say together celebrate and praise thy all sweete and glorious name, which is aboue all names to be blessed &.

y Phil. 2. 10.

Let them repeate againe, and againe with great ioy, repeate all praises due and deseruedlie to bee saide of thy name, and that so manie times, as there bee either in the heauen, stars; or in the sea, fishes; or in the earth, corners; or in the Bible, letters.

And all this being doone, yet must I say, they haue not prayesd thy name sufficiently, the which I desire to commend euen to the vermost of my strength, and by all meanes to extoll, vntill I attaine vnto those praises, which now cannot be expressed by the voice of mortall men.

*The fourth booke*

So that thou seest now my Soule,  
the greatnes and the excellencie  
of God thy creator and redeemer  
his benefits, the which no creature,  
nor all creatures may recompence,  
whom hee hath made vnto the praise  
and glory of his eternall and blessed  
2 Isai. 43.7 name <sup>a</sup>, who needeth no glory, but  
is alone all-sufficient for himselfe; he  
Exo. 3.14 that is what hee is <sup>a</sup>, is his owne glo-  
ry.

The number of his benefits was so  
great, that I could not place them  
all before mine eies; and therefore  
of a great many I chose three pre-  
cious gifts, euen as the Wisemen  
did, which were about to offer to  
the Lord <sup>b</sup>, wherein I thought good  
to comprehend the rest.

For euery benefit of God, if you  
marke well, is either of nature, or of  
grace, or of superexcellencie: and  
whatsoever else is, maie fullie bee  
referred vnto one of these three  
kinds.

In the creation; you haue the be-  
nefit of nature; in the Redemption,  
the benefit of superexcellencie; in  
our Iustification, note the benefit of  
grace.

For

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5

*of the Imitation of Christ.*

For all which, and for euery of  
them, glorie bee to thee, O sacred  
Trinitie, one equall deitie, both  
before all worldes, nowe  
and for euermore ⁊,  
Amen.

¶ Rom. 17. 13

**FINIS.**



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